SOME

REMARKS

Recommended unto

Eccleſiaſticks

OF ALL

PERSWASIONS.

NOT to trouble you with Prefaces or Apologies, it is certain, That as in the Church of the *Jews, they were not all Iſrael that were of Iſrael*, Rom. 9. 6. ſo in our Church they have not all been, nor yet are, all *true Church of England-men* who boaſt and pride themſelves in monopolizing that Character to themſelves: And yet I hope I may with great Truth affirm, That the *Independant Proteſtant Church of England*, is the beſt conſtituted Church, both for Doctrine and Diſcipline, in the World; and that there are both in our Hierarchie and in our Inferior Clergy, *many ſeven ſhining Stars, many true Nathaniels indeed, in whom is no guile*, John 1. 47. and yet I fear in the ſame Church, that as there hath been, ſo there are ſtill many ſeven deadly Sinners, Linſey-wolſey Divines, not much unlike thoſe of *Samaria, who feared God, yet ſerved Idols:* or like thoſe of *Iſrael who ſwore by the Lord and Melcom.* Whoever will ſeriouſly and impartially conſider and examine the Prints of Dr. *Leighton, Pryn, Baſtwick* and *Burton*, and compare them with the Prints of *Harſenet, Parker,* (late Biſhop of *Oxon*) *Montague, Sybthorp, Manwaring*, and others, muſt conclude the Doctrines and Poſitions of theſe Men to be far more pernicious and deſtructive to whole Kingdoms than the other; and better deſerved their puniſhment than to be rewarded with Preferments as they were. And then if we conſider how Inſtrumental ſome Prelates of thoſe times were in Puniſhing the one, and Preferring the other, contrary to all true Religion, and to the genius and ſenſe of the moſt Pious of the Nation; thereby manifeſtly eſpouſing their Cauſe to be their own, whereby they became *participes criminis*; by which misbehaviour of theirs they brought upon themſelves contempt, and the Nation abhorred them, and would not be ſatisfied untill they had diſenabled them by Act of Parliament, 17 *Car.* And if we conſider the Opinions that the late Biſhop of *Oxon.* (otherwiſe a pious worthy Prelate) ſacrificed to the Flames in *July* 1683, and the purport of the Addreſs of the other Univerſity to his Majeſty in *September* 1681. And alſo the Contents of very many Sermons preached on the Ninth of *September* 1683. Beſides very many others, rank of one and the ſame poyſonous Leaven, all ſquinting towards Arbitrary Power, and, as much as in them lies, alluring and encouraging Kings to attempt the ſame, by rendring them abſolutely Abſolute, and unaccountable until *Dooms-day* in the Afternoon; whereby they become only Nominal (I had almoſt ſaid Pungril) *Church-of-England-men*, but not true *Iſraelites*, not true *Nathaniels* indeed: Theſe things conſidered, how can I expect leſs than a whole hoſt of *Chemarims* about my Ears? But when I conſider that (according to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*) the Word of God is the only Rule of Faith and Obedience, and diſapproves all implicite Faith, blind Obedience, and Infallibility, and that we are not to imbibe Doctrines on truſt, and expect Salvation

by a deputy Faith and Obedience. And that St. *Paul* exhorts us, that *we be no more henceforth children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. 4. 14. And the Scripture it ſelf counts it *nobleneſs of mind to examine the doctrines of our Teachers, whether thoſe things are ſo*, Act 17. 11. And the *Angel of the Church of Epheſus*, highly commended for that, *he had tried them which ſaid they were Apoſtles and were not, and found them lyers*, Revel. 2. 2. And St. *Paul bids us prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 21. Sure then after ſuch Apoſtolical Precepts, it is no crime to inquire whether they that boaſt of being *Church-of-England-men* are ſo in truth or no. I appeal to your ſelves, Is it Fair, nay, is it Juſt? nay, Is it not Pride and Folly to aſſert Truth by arrogating to your ſelves the only freedom of Speech, and ſtopping of Mouths, and Pens, and Preſs, and burning Opinions of others, equally gifted and furniſhed with the ſame means of knowledge with your ſelves, and have like precious Souls to ſave as your ſelves; and yet can let Popiſh Books, and other vile Tenets, be publiſhed and read as common as your own without Controul, Fire, or Faggot; and connive at them, but ſtorm againſt Proteſtant Conventicles, and can let Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremungers, and Adulterers, march openly and confidently in our Streets, without ſo much as the Summons of an Apparitor, or Excommunication.

Tacitus, intending to write the Life of *Agricola*, *Incurſurus tam ſæva & infeſta virtutibus tempora*, did beg Pardon, which otherwiſe he would not have done, conſidering that *Aurelius Ruſticus* for praiſing *Pætus Thraſea*, calling him *virum ſanctum*, was put to Death by *Nero*, *virtutem ipſam exſcindere concupiſcens*. And alſo *Herennius Senecio*, becauſe he had written the Life of *Helvidius Priſcus* another *Cato* or *Brutus*, a Perſon of moſt free Speech in behalf of the Commonwealth, for calling them moſt Holy and Upright Perſons. Beſides, ſeverity was uſed againſt the Writers of Books, charge being given to the *Ædiles* and *Triumviri capitales*, that the Works of thoſe Noble Wits ſhould ſolemnly be burnt in the Market-place, ſuppoſing that with that Fire they could ſtop the Mouths of the People of *Rome*, aboliſh the Liberty of the Senate, and ſuppreſs the Knowledge of all Mankind: Expelling withall, the Profeſſors of Wiſdom, and all good Learning and Arts, leſt any ſparks of Honeſty ſhould remain. Hence *Sulpitia*, a Poeteſs of that time,

> *Nunc igitur qui res Romanas imperat inter,*
> *Et ſtudia & ſapiens hominum nomenque genuſque,*
> *Omnia abice foras atque urbe excedere juſſit.*

A very noble and pious Example taken from Heatheniſh Princes for Chriſtians to imitate. We naturally love, nay long for forbidden Fruit, and are moſt inquiſitive after Books forbidden, as being always jealous that *ſome Truths lie dormant* in ſuch, ready to fly in the Faces of thoſe that forbid them, and make wiſe Men conclude, *That Reaſon cannot ſtand on their ſide, who will not ſuffer the Reaſons of both Parties to be read and publiſhed.* Goſpel Truths need no ſuch Artifices; Souls purely divine without mixtures and allay of little pittiful ends and intereſts do ſcorn the motion, leſt happily ſome Divine Truths may by ſuch ſiniſter devices be ſuppreſſed and ſtifled. And others being of the contrary Opinion, diametrically oppoſite one to the other, and each differing no farther from the one than the other from them, and neither Infallible, what would you have us poor Laicks do? death and damnation being pulpited againſt us by both Perſwaſions, as one Opinion or the other happeneth to poſſeſs the Pulpit.

1. I ſay, That the differences among us are occaſioned not as Chriſtians, but as Men. The *Goſpel is the Goſpel of Peace*; Peace was the laſt Legacy that Chriſt left to his Church: *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, John 14. 27. And his command *was to have peace one with another*, Mark 9. 50. and the *unity of the ſpirit is preſerved by the bond of peace*, Epheſ. 4. 3. But the little ſelf-ends of Earth and Intereſt, of the Preferments, Ambition, and Domination, is the cauſe of Controverſies, Animoſities, and Contentions, to which Prieſts are as ſubject as others.

2. I ſay, There were falſe Prophets among the *Jews*, and was foretold, that as there were falſe Prophets among them, ſo there ſhould be *falſe teachers among us*, 2 Pet. 2. 1. And St. *Paul* forewarned the Biſhop of *Epheſus*, That *out of your own ſelves, ſhould ariſe men ſpeaking perverſe things*, Acts 20. 30. and Chriſt himſelf, when he cautioneth

tioneth us to beware of *falſe Prophets by calling, which ſhall be found falſe by their teaching.* St. *Paul* alſo granteth *many to be miniſters of Chriſt by profeſſion, and yet in words and deeds the miniſters of Satan,* 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14, 15. ſuch falſe Apoſtles, ſaith he, are *deceitful workers, and transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt:* and for certain theſe Prieſts of ſuch different Perſwaſions, Principles, and Doctrines, cannot both be in the right, and therefore good Reaſon that if poor Laicks are to live and die Eternally, according to the Doctrines our Paſtors pulpit to us, it is but juſt, and right, that we *ſhould try the Spirits,* as commanded, *John* 1. 41. and *judg of Doctrine* as directed, *Cor.* 10. 15. for certainly we are not to live by the *deputy Faith* of our Officers, but by our own Faith, and muſt ſtand and fall accordingly: Now ſeeing our Teachers cannot agree Doctrines (as in point of Reſiſtance and Paſſive Obedience, taking and refuſing new Oaths, Ceremonies, Conformity, as well as in many others they do not) and both cannot be in the right, then are their Flocks in a very ſad condition, Pulpit-rebels both to the one and to the other, as the one or the other prevails, for neither are Infallible, ſo that we are clearly left to be our own Judges, and *both Prieſt and People have no other Divine Rule or Authority without them (warrantable to one another, as a common Ground or Rule, either for Holy living or deciſion of Controverſies in Matters of Religion, unto which all ought to ſubmit,) but the Scriptures, nor any other within either Prieſt or People. But the Illumination of the Spirit ſo interpreting the ſame Scriptures as warrantable both to Prieſts and People; and to ſuch whoſe Conſciences they can ſo perſwade can have no other ground in matters of Religion, but only from the ſame Scriptures; and theſe not being poſſible to be underſtood without Divine Illumination, which no man can know at all times to be in himſelf, much leſs to be at any time for certain in another: and therefore the Scriptures being the only infallible Rule of life, and of judging Controverſies, and the Light within us no farther Light, than wherein it agrees with this Word; if it do not, it is Darkneſs not Light.*

Now theſe things conſidered, will juſtifie our taking up the Cudgels for our own Defence and Juſtification in theſe great and dangerous Diſputes, having Souls, Lives, Fortunes, Liberties to ſave and enjoy, as well as Eccleſiaſticks.

Though the Church of *England* be the beſt conſtituted Church in the World, wherein the lively Oracles of God are purely Preached, and full fraught with many, very worthy pious and learned Prieſts and Prelates, yet there are amongſt them many falſe Prophets, (and no wonder, was not there a *Judas* among the Twelve?) and falſe Teachers; nay, very many time-ſervers that pimp for Dominatlon, Honors, Preferments, and other vile and baſe ends, and, like *Micha's Levite,* for a little better reward ſwallow any thing, ſtick at nothing, by School-quirks and falſe Reaſonings, perverting Scriptures to rob whole Kingdoms of their Laws, Liberties, and Religion, that daub with untempered Mortar, flatter Profaneneſs, court and allure Royalties to Perjury and Robbery, whilſt they Preach *Quod libet licet,* and Sovereignty *abſolutely Abſolute* to be in Kings, and their unaccountableneſs, betray Truths, ſmothering and diſſembling the Strictneſs and Purity of holy Ways; I contend not here againſt the lazy Drones that ſuck the Hony from the Bees by their Non-reſidency, nor againſt the Dammees *Euphoniæ gratia:* theſe are perſonal Sins, and hurt others only by Example, and ſuch there are; but my conteſt is againſt thoſe Eccleſiaſticks who living, and had intereſt at the upper end of the World, not only uſurped more Powers than they had right unto, but abuſed thoſe Powers and that Intereſt they had at Court; from which abuſe of Power pulpiting *Divine Prerogatives of Kings* beyond meaſure, their unaccountableneſs, miſconſtruing and extending *Paſſive Obedience* beyond its juſt Bounds: Which have been the Harrangues of Prints and Pulpits, till their own Copiholds came to be concerned, come all the diſturbances of Government in Church and State to whole Kingdoms. No wonder then if contempt be poured on ſuch of the Clergy (and on ſuch of them only) as Preach ſuch deſtructive Doctrines as deſerve the ſevere Reprimand of whole Kingdoms; for thereby all Laws, Liberty, Property, Religion, and Honeſty would be trampled under foot.

Therefore it's no Crime in the Laity to ſtand up in the defence of their own Rights and Concerns. As it is the duty of Prieſts, Miniſters of the Goſpel, *to teach us with Wiſdom and Knowledge,* ſo it is our duty *to eſteem them highly in love* (if they do ſo) *for their Works ſake; and they that labour in the Word and Doctrine are worthy of double Honour and double Revenue;* they cannot have too much: but they that do not Teach us with Knowledge and Underſtanding are worthy of neither; but when they abuſe and uſurp Powers, they have no right unto, and claim them as their due

due by the moſt Potent Claim in the World (*Jure Divino*) *monſtrum horrendum!* Witneſs *Excommunication*, becauſe there hath (as of old, ſo of more late Days) ſo much ill uſe made thereof, of which I ſhall only ſay with *Eraſtus de Excommunicatione*, *that there is no ſuch thing* (as it is now uſed) *in all the Scripture*; *in Sanctis Scripturæ nullum extat mandatum, ſed commentum eſt pure humanum*, p. 67. Which renders the Execution thereof abominable. To wreſt Scripture to maintain ſuch unlawful Powers doth very ill become the Prieſts of the moſt High God. As it is their Duty to Teach, ſo it is our Priviledge and Right to judge of their Doctrines, yea, *and to put them in mind and admoniſh them alſo of their duty*, Coloſſ. 4. 17. Miſtake me not, as if this were bent againſt the Biſhops only; no, no, Papiſt, Presbyter, Independant are all to blame in this Point: and it's no excuſe to us if we are deceived by the cunning Craftineſs of our Ghoſtly Fathers, *whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

Let us look a little back, no farther than our own Times and Memories, and let them ſtand or fall in the good Graces of the Kingdom, according to their Merits or Demerits. In the time of King *James*, the Parliament ſitting, Dr. *Harſenet* Biſhop of *Chicheſter* Preached a Sermon at *Whitehall* upon *Mark* 12. 17. *Give unto Cæſar*, &c. wherein he inſiſted, *that Goods and Money were* Cæſars, *and therefore they were not to be denied unto him*; at which the whole Parliament ſtormed and took great Offence, which that wiſe and peaceable Prince endeavoured to calm and qualifie by moderate Expoſition thereof, to the Lords and Commons for that purpoſe Aſſembled in the *Banquetting-Houſe*, *viz.* That the Doctor meant it according to the Laws and Cuſtoms of the Country wherein they did live. This did mollifie, but not ſatisfie, and therefore the Sermon was burnt to ſatisfie their Indignation againſt ſuch vile and deſtructive Doctrines; for which he was well rewarded by being tranſlated to *Norwich*, then to *York*, a ſhrewd ſign that ſuch Doctrines did pleaſe the Court, tho' not the Parliament. Likewiſe Mr. *Ric. Montague*, who 21 *Jac.* printed an Anſwer to the late *Gag of Proteſtants*: and about 22 *Jac.* printed another Book, Entituled, *A Treatiſe of the Invocation of Saints.* 1 *Car.* 1. he printed another, Entituled, *An Appeal to* Cæſar; which Books contained ſo many Erronious and falſe Doctrines, contrary to the very Articles agreed on in the Convocation held at *London* 1562. that they diſobliged the whole Nation ſo much that the Commons Houſe exhibited Articles againſt him 1 *Car.* and prayed that he might be puniſhed. This Cauſe began 21 *Jac.* when he had publiſhed a former Book, called *A new Gag for an old Gooſe*, and was then queſtioned in Parliament, and committed to the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, and ended in an Admonition only given to *Montague* by the Archbiſhop, who diſliked that Book, and thought to ſuppreſs it but could not: It was printed and dedicated to the King; and his Cauſe was recommended to the Duke of *Buckingham* by the Biſhops of *Oxford*, *Rocheſter*, and St. *Davids*; all mighty Church of *England* Men, (not *Puritans*) whereby they eſpouſed it as their common Cauſe and Concern; and *Montague* is made his Majeſties Chaplain, yet his Majeſty was ſo juſt and prudent as to leave him to the Parliament; which did not pleaſe the Biſhops: and the Commons Houſe did exhibit Articles againſt him, and prayed his Book might be burnt and himſelf puniſhed, but the Biſhops prevailed ſo much with the King on their own behalf, that he was made firſt Biſhop of *Chicheſter*, and then Biſhop of *Norwich*, and his Book only called in by Proclamation, yet ſo as all Anſwers thereunto by Preaching or Writing were forbidden. For the ſeveral Anſwers made by Dr. *Featly*, Dr. *Goad*, in their Parallels by Mr. *Burton*, *Ward*, *Yates*, *Wotton*, *Rouſe*, in a Book called King *James's Religion*, were all ſuppreſſed, and ſome of the Printers queſtioned in the High Commiſſion; and *Montague* had a Royal Pardon, which was inquired into 4 *Car.* by the Commons Houſe.

Ruſhworth, 644, 1628.

Ruſh. 177.

In the ſame Parliament a Petition was exhibited from ſome Bookſellers and Printers in *London*, complaining of the reſtraint of Books written againſt Popery; and the contrary allowed of by the only means of Dr. *Laud* Biſhop of *London*, and divers of the Printers and Bookſellers were ſent for by Purſevants, for Printing Books againſt Popery, and the Licenſing is only reſtrained to the Biſhop of *London* and his Chaplains.

Ph. de Comines complained, That tho' the King of *France* had a wiſe Council, yet they rid all upon one Horſe. And muſt we be Prieſt-ridden by a Biſhop and his Chaplains? Upon which Mr. *Selden* declared, That there was no Law to prevent Printing of any Books, only a Decree in *Star-Chamber*, and he adviſed that a Law might be made concerning Printing, elſe one may be Fined, Im-

priſoned

priſoned, and his Goods taken from him by vertue of ſuch Decrees, which is a great invaſion upon the Liberty of the Subject.

About the ſame time alſo came out *Cofins* his Book *of Seven Sacraments*, containing ſtrange things; againſt whom the Commons Houſe exhibit 21 Articles, whereof one was for calling ſome Gentlewomen Whores, and Jades, and Pagans, and for tearing ſome of their Clothes when they were in their Seats in the Church, becauſe they would not bow to the Altar, nor at the Name of Jeſus, *&c. Nalſon* 789.

About this time the Clergy had wrought themſelves with great Power and Intereſt at Court, which encouraged the Inferior Clergy to great boldneſs, and to pulpit any thing that might pleaſe, as the very Road of Preferment, *Teach for Hire, and Divine for Money.*

Another that did appear bare-faced, and without any Vizard, was one *Sybthorp*, Vicar of *Brackley*, ſcarce Batchellor of Art, who preached *Feb.* 22. 1626. at *Lent Aſſizes* at *Northampton*, on *Rom.* 13. 7. Which Sermon, called *Apoſtolical Obedience*, tho' full fraught with many Theſes deſtructive to all human Society: yet had ſuch countenance from the Court-Clergy, that they procured his Majeſty to ſend to the Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* to Licenſe it for the Preſs, for the better grace of the buſineſs, which his Majeſty did ſeveral times by Mr. *William Murrey*; but the Archbiſhop, like a true *Nathaniel*, refuſed to give it an *Imprimatur*; but not without great Reaſons humbly ſubmitted to his Majeſty for his ſo doing. It was afterwards carried to Dr. *Worrall*, Chaplain to the then Biſhop of *London*; who having hand over head Licens'd it, afterward took advice of Councel; who told him, That if all in that Sermon were true, there was no *meum & tuum* left to Subjects, and that he might be called to an Account for it and hanged: Whereupon he blotted out his Name again; and the Book was afterward Licens'd by *Laud*, then Biſhop of *London*, who gave it a great and ſtately Allowance, and cauſed it to be dedicated to the King, and publiſhed upon his Majeſties Commiſſion for the Raiſing of Money by the way of Loan; which was by ſuch Royal Authority, to give greater countenance thereto: It taught *that the King's Duty is to direct and make Laws, that nothing may excuſe from Active Obedience, but what is againſt the Law of God, or Nature, or Impoſſible: That all Antiquity was abſolutely for Abſolute Obedience in all Civil and Temporal Things.* *Laud* alſo allowed the Book called, *The Seven Sacraments*, with all its Errors, which were afterwards expunged.

Another bold-faced Prieſt, that did appear about the ſame time, was Dr. *Manwaring*, who promoted the ſame Deſign in two Sermons, preached before the King and Court at *Whitehall*, called *Religion and Allegiance*; in which he declared, *That the King was not bound to obſerve the Laws of the Realm concerning the Subjects Rights and Liberty, but that his Royal Will and Command in impoſing Loans and Taxes without common conſent in Parliament, doth oblige the Subjects Conſcience upon pain of Eternal Damnation; that they who refuſed to pay this Loan, offended againſt the Law of God and the Kings Supreme Authority, and became guilty of Impiety, Diſloyalty and Rebellion; and that the Authority of Parliament is not neceſſary for Raiſing the of Aids, and Subſidies;* &c. for which he was impeached in Parliament, 4 *Car.* for that they tended to alter and ſubvert the whole Frame and Fabrick of this State and Common-wealth, that they tended to infuſe into the Conſcience of his Majeſty, the perſwaſion of a Power not bounding it ſelf with Laws; which King *James*, in his Speech *March* 21. 1609. to the Parliament, calls *Tyranny with Perjury*: he endeavours to perſwade the Conſcience of the Subjects, that they are bound to obey commands illegal; yea, he damns them for not obeying them; he robs the Subject of the Property of their Goods, and ſeeks like *Faux* and his fellows, to blow up Parliaments, and Parliamentary Power, *&c.* That they held it a great preſumption for a private Divine to debate the Right and Power of the King, which is a matter of ſuch high Conſequence, as to be handled only in Parliament, and that with moderation: therefore upon the whole matter he was cenſured *to be Impriſoned during the pleaſure of the Houſe, Fined* 1000 *l. to make his ſubmiſſion at both Bars, ſuſpended three Years from the exerciſe of his Miniſtry, diſabled to have any Eccleſiaſtical Government, or Secular Office, for ever diſabled to Preach at Court, his Book to be burnt in* London, *and in both Univerſities, and the re-printing thereof to be inhibited by his Majeſties Proclamation.*

Notwithſtanding all theſe Cenſures, Reprimands, and Judgment of Parliament, yet ſuch Juglers were the mighty Church of *England* Prieſts and Prelates, and ſuch was the Prevalency, Potency, and Impudency of the then Court Clergy, (no *Na-*

thaniels) that they procured their Royal Pardons of all Errors heretofore committed by them, either in Speaking, Writing, or Printing, and *Manwaring* was immediately preſented to the Rectory of *Stampford Rivers* in *Eſſex*, and had a Diſpenſation to hold it, together with the Rectory of St. *Giles's in the Fields*. *Ruſhworth's Collect.* when as the juſtneſs of the Nation required their ſevere Reprimands, nay, their Puniſhments, nay, the Muzling of their Mouths.

Theſe and their Abettors, (no *Nathaniels*) Biſhops of *London*, *Durham*, *Rocheſter*, *Oxford*, and others, being of the ſame Quire and Chorus, ſung the ſame Tune, and boaſted themſelves to be the true Church of *England* Men; but the Archbiſhop-Abbot (though Primate and Metropolitan of all *England*,) and multitudes of others, both Biſhops, Prieſts, and Lay, much more Loyal and more True Church of *England* Men than themſelves, were branded for not being right Church of *England* Men, and reviled as Puritanical, Factious; what not? Under which Notion, the Archbiſhop-Abbot ſuffered being diſgraced at Court, commanded to withdraw into the Country, Sequeſtred, *&c.*

Whoever will ſeriouſly conſider how Induſtriouſly, Active, and Inſtrumental, the Biſhops then in Vogue (who were the Biſhops of *London*, and his Complices, *viz. Durham*, *Rocheſter*, *Oxon.* St. *Davids*, and others) were to procure Dr. *Alexander Leighton*, a learned *Scotch-man*, Mr. *Burton*, *B. D.* Mr. *Pryn*, Barriſter, and Dr. *Baſtwick*, to be ſo inhumanly cenſured in the *Star-Chamber*, and *High Commiſſion*, *viz.* Impriſoned, Fined, Whipt, Pillored, Ears cut off, Cheeks branded, with other Severities fitter for Infidels, nay, for Brutes rather than Chriſtians; and for what? not truly for Crimes, ſcarce Peccadilloes (but rather for Rebukes of Sin,) as their Works do teſtifie, in reſpect of what abominable Doctrines their own Prieſts preached, countenancing and preferring thoſe that Preached them, eſpouſing their Cauſe as their own, and ſo became *participes criminis*, tho' againſt the Intereſt and Senſe of the whole Kingdom aſſembled in Parliament: whereby, and by their being a conſtant dead wait for the Court againſt the Kingdom, they brought ſo great a Diſdain and Contempt on their Hierarchy, and thoſe Courts, that the Nation was not able to bear them, and was forced to take away both theſe Courts, and their Priviledge of Sitting in the Houſe of Lords.

On which I ſhall only Remark thus much, *viz.* That thoſe *Eccleſiaſticks* that preached Prerogative higheſt, tho' to the ruine of the Nation, and tho' condemned by the whole Kingdom in Parliament, and that ſeverely, and with high Reſentments, yet when the Parliament was up, Biſhop *Laud* and his Complices (no true, but Mungril Church of *England* Men) ſo improved their Intereſt at Court, that they were preferred; and others that did but Write and Preach againſt their violent and unconſcionable Proceedings were barbarouſly cenſured and uſed; which the Parliament ſo laid to Heart, that they took away both theſe Courts: And when thoſe Three, *viz. Prin*, *Baſtwick*, and *Burton*, returned from their deſigned perpetual Impriſonment, they were met and careſſed all along the Road, and received by the City with great Joy and Acclamations. And ſome while after Biſhop *Laud* came to his unhappy Doom; how deſervedly I judge not.

If ſo to countenance and prefer thoſe that Preach Doctrines ſo deſtructive to whole Nations, and to Perſecute learned and pious Men, by the Character of a right Church of *England* Man, I muſt confeſs that I cannot diſtinguiſh between *Nathaniels* and thoſe *that can ſwear by the Lord and Melcom.* I Appeal to the whole World, whether of thoſe two Contemporaries, Archbiſhop *Abbot* or Biſhop *Laud*, were the *Nathaniel*, the trueſt Church of *England* Man? *Abbot* refuſing, and *Laud* granting an *Imprimatur* to *Sibthorp's* Sermon, which was condemned to be burnt, and yet *Abbot* Diſcountenanced, Sequeſtred, ſent into the Country, *&c.* and *Laud* advanced.

Beſides, I verily believe, that it cannot be proved by any plain place of Scripture, that there is any Power under Heaven, Eccleſiaſtick or Civil, that hath lawful Authority to forbid any Man (lawfully qualified) to Preach the Goſpel, or to Proſecute any Man for denying ſubmiſſion to the uſe of *Ceremonies no ways Eſſential to the Salvation of Souls.* If ſo, what are we modeſtly to think of thoſe *Eccleſiaſticks* and their Adherents, that ever ſince the Reformation Perſecuted our Diſſenters for Non-conforming to ſuch commands?

What made ſo many of our Learned, Pious, Conſcientious Clergy and Laiety, Orthodox both in Life and Doctrine, cry *Migremus hinc*, and plant themſelves in Foreign Barbarous Countries, but Perſecutions for their Conſciences, and for Rebukes of Sin rather than for any Crimes or Sins? And yet their Perſecutors had the Impudency of *Ahab the ſon of Omri, (who did evil in the ſight of the Lord above all that went before him,)* to tax them for Troublers of *Iſrael*, when themſelves, *Ahab*-like troubled it, for they medled not with the Conformiſt, but the Conformiſt with them; not conſidering that Chriſt came to take away the heavy Yoke of *Jewiſh Ceremonies*, and he and his Apoſtles never uſed nor preſcribed any other; and why any other Authority ſhould impoſe any other Ceremonies, and compel Obedience to them, whereby they require other Conditions of Goſpel-Communion than ever Chriſt himſelf did, or his Apoſtles after him, is paſt all Underſtanding. They would oblige us, to ſhew us by any one plain place of Scripture, that Chriſt hath given any Charter to his Church, or to any Officers thereof, to require more Ceremonies to be admitted into his Fellowſhip and Worſhip than he himſelf hath done; or, to deny their Communinn, that are as capable of Heaven without the uſe of them, as themſelves with the uſe of them.

To the Council met at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* 15. conſiſting of *Apoſtles*, and all the *faithful in the Church*, and to the *Holy Ghoſt*, it ſeemed good to lay upon them no *greater burthen* than *things neceſſary*, yet ſome of our Mungril Church of *England* Men, taking themſelves to be wiſer than either the Apoſtles or the Holy Ghoſt, have dared to impoſe Ceremonies and Obſervances, no way neceſſary nor conducing to the Saving of Souls, or Edification; yea, and more ſtrictly requiring Conformity unto them, puniſhing more ſeverely the breach of them, than the breach of Gods Precepts.

Tho' to err manifeſtly againſt the Scriptures, be the moſt dangerous and greateſt blindneſs that can poſſibly befal any Chriſtian; and the greateſt Chaſtiſement that God can impoſe in puniſhment of them, whoever ſhall make uſe of the Divine Authority to ſerve their own turns in any worldly Intereſts; yet ſo active is the Zeal of Prieſts of enlarging their own Phylacteries, their Greatneſs and Impery, that they make no Bones of wreſting and perverting any Scripture, Old or New, to make it ſerve their turns; which in plain *Engliſh* is to make Godlineſs wait upon Gain, Pride, and Ambition.

Let us now alſo add and conſider the grand Pique theſe Prieſtly Court Paraſites (pure Church of *England* Men) have had againſt Puritans, (the ſober and thinking part of the Nation,) and Puritaniſm of old, and the ſame under the names of *Whigs* and *Phanaticks*, the Arts and Tricks they have uſed to ſuppreſs the Purity and Power of Religion, by reviling their Perſons, decrying and ſuppreſſing Lectures on the Week-days, Sermons on Sundays in the Afternoon, and Conventicles, and giving encouragement to Idleneſs, Looſeneſs, and Prophaneſs in the People. Witneſs the Book allowing Sports on the Lord's Day; and the Countenance given thereto by the then Court Prelates and Prelatical Prieſts, who procured a *Royal Proclamation* to juſtifie the ſame: And Archbiſhop *Laud ſequeſtred Mr.* Wilſon *four Years for not Reading that Book; and proſecuted him in the High Commiſſion Court, for not Reading the Prayers of the laſt Edition, commanded by the Archbiſhop.* Nalſon 571. Who yet Countenanced Publick Sports on the Lord's-Day by the Examples of the Reformed Churches beyond Sea, and for the Publick Dances of our Youth upon Country Greens on Sundays after the Duties of the Day; ſo Biſhop *Bramhall* (otherwiſe a pious Perſon, and ſtout aſſertor of the Proteſtant Religion againſt Popery,) who ſees nothing in them but innocent and agreeable to that under ſort of People, who likewiſe takes the *promiſcuous Licenſe to unqualified Perſons to read the Scripture to be far more prejudicial, nay, more pernicious than the over rigorous reſtraint of the* Romaniſts, *p.* 641, 642, 643. *Printed* 1633.

This may be the Court Dialect, and Prelatical Goſpel, but certainly not Apoſtolical: for the ſame Equity for keeping the Sabbath ſtrictly, yea, very ſtrictly (not *Jewiſhly* Ceremonious) is as incumbent and obliging unto us under the Goſpel at this Day as to the *Jews* under the Law. I cannot underſtand ſuch Liberty to be keeping of the Sabbath, but rather a *polluting of it*, Iſai. 56. 2, 6. Keeping of the Sabbath is not to reſt only from bodily Labour, but to *abſtain from doing our own pleaſures, and our own ways, and not ſpeaking our own words*, Iſai. 58. 13, 14. and abſtaining from the delights of Sin, as well as from the Works of our ordinary Callings. What! weary of ſtrict keeping the Sabbaths here, and yet preſume on the

the expectation of an Eternity, which ſhall be nothing elſe but Sabbaths? Certainly our Sabbaths here are but an Earneſt and a Pledge of that Eternal Sabbath which we deſire to Celebrate with Saints and Angels in Heavenly Places. I wonder how ſo Pious a Prince, and of ſuch mighty Inſight and Underſtanding, could be ſo impoſed upon by his Prelates, and to countenance ſuch a Book by his Proclamation. I wonder alſo how Biſhop *Bramhall* could ſhew ſuch diſlike of unqualified Perſons Reading the Scriptures, (when to ſearch them is a *Precept Univerſal*, and to *judge of Doctrines alſo*, and) whereas there's nothing in them of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation to be believed, but what is very obvious and intelligible to *every indifferent capacity*.

O Bold Church of *England* Men, that dare to be wiſer than Almighty God, by taking upon them to foreſee Dangers that God never did foreſee, and to prevent them by ſuch Methods as thwart God's own Appointments. Beyond all peradventure ſuch Doctrines, ſuch Practices, ſuch Methods, can never conduce to the Benefit and Service of God's Holy Church and Choſen, or to the Purity or Propagation of the Goſpel, but are rather a *muzling of their Mouth, who ſhould tread out their Corn, which ſhould bring forth the food of Life Everlaſting unto the People.* However, tho' there have been ſuch Prieſts and Prelates that have ſo acted, yet I am not of their Opinion who therefore deemed them Papiſts in Heart. No, no, ſome of them have given abundant Teſtimony to the contrary, by their worthy Works, as of Archbiſhop *Laud*, *Bramhall*, and others. But it is too plain that they improved what Intereſt they had at the upper end of the World, towards the Setting up and Advancing the *Power, Impery, and Grandeur of the Church Men*, and to keep the Laiety under; and did not improve their Intereſt towards advancing the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel, or towards the *making of a high way of Holineſs throughout the Land, that way-fairing men, though fools, might not err therein*, Iſai. 35. 8. that being certainly their greater Duty, to have beſtowed themſelves and their Intereſt on the benefit and Service of the Church, rather than of the Pride and Ambition of Church Men.

Thus much by way of Caution, to prevent the like for the future, being of Opinion, that the Perſecuting Diſſenters and Conventicles is as *National a Sin* as Drinking, Drabbing, and Swearing, and ought to be as *nationally to be lamented both by Clergy and Laiety*: For I muſt confeſs my ſelf abſolutely ignorant of any one thing, or ſignal Conſtitution, from the very beginning of the Reformation to this very day, to which the Diſſenters were required to conform and ſubmit, *that was eſſentially neceſſary, either to the Salvation of Souls, or to the more pure and ſincere Preaching of the Goſpel, unto which they denied their Conformity or Submiſſion.* They would yet very much oblige us, if they would make known unto us ſuch Conſtitutions, if any ſuch there be: for if in truth they have not been ſuch, then the Impoſers, not the Diſſenters, are the Separatiſts and Schiſmaticks, for the very ſelf ſame Reaſons that the Papiſts are Schiſmaticks, not Proteſtants. And I am afraid that it is not Conſcience, but ſiniſter ends, that makes Prelates contend ſo out of meaſure for things no way Eſſential to Salvation. According to St. *Cyprian*, *In ſinu ſacerdotum ambitio dormit, ibi ſub umbrâ recubat, in Secreto Thalami & fraudulenter occultat & nihil intentatum prætermittit.* 442.

About the Year 1558, there being a Cuſtom among the People of *Paris*, in the Summer Evenings, to go out of the Suburbs of St. *German* in great Multitudes to take the *Freſco*, and to Solace themſelves with divers kinds of Sports; thoſe of the new Religion, inſtead of doing ſo, began to ſing the *Pſalms* of *David* in *French* Verſes; the Multitude firſt laughed at the Novelty, then leaving the Sports, joyned themſelves unto the Singers. And the number of thoſe who came to that place began to increaſe more than uſually, whereupon the Pope's *Nuntio* told the King of this Novelty, as of a thing pernicious and dangerous; becauſe the Miniſteries of Religion, uſually Celebrated in the Church in the *Latin* Tongue by Religious Men only, were put into the Mouths of the common People in the Vulgar Language, which was an invention of the *Lutherans*; telling him, that if he did not reſiſt the beginnings, in a ſhort time, all *Paris* would be *Lutherans*: the King gave order that the principal Authors ſhould be proceeded againſt; wherein they went not very far, having found *Anthony*, King of *Navar*, and his Wife in that Number: but for hereafter it was forbid upon pain of Death. *Trent.* 410.

Thus

Thus you ſee how both the *Hugonots* and *Papiſts* behaved themſelves beyond Sea, and that the King and Queen of *Navar* were not aſhamed to Conventicle openly, nor of Chriſt, nor of his Words, leſt Chriſt ſhould be aſhamed of *them when he ſhall come in his own Glory, and in his Fathers, and of the Holy Angels,* Luke 9. 26. nor aſhamed to ſearch the Scriptures in their own Language, becauſe commanded, and becauſe *in them is eternal life,* John 5. 39.

This Nation and Government did preſume at leaſt, that ſuch ſolemn Rebukes, ſuch ſevere Reprimands as the Preachers of ſuch Doctrines received from the whole Kingdom, repreſented in Parliament by King, Lords, and Commons, Clergy and Layety ſhould have forewarned and diſcouraged all the ſucceeding Clergy for ever Preaching ſuch deſtructive Doctrines again; of which we now ſee and feel the ſmart and ſad effects, which our prudent Predeceſſors did foreſee, and would have prevented by their timely Rebukes and Precautions: but they have not prevailed. In the Church of *Epheſus* there were thoſe that boaſted themſelves to be Apoſtles, but being tried by the Angel of that Church were found Lyars. Is it not ſo with us? Have we not many that boaſt themſelves to be the only true Church of *England* Men, that if tried by our Angels would be found but Mungrils? nay, Lyars, *making Kings glad with their Wickedneſs, and Princes with their Lyes, Hoſ.* 7. 3. But the Works, and Labour, and Patience, of our true Church of *England* Men, true *Nathaniels* indeed, cannot bear ſuch Church of *England* Men as are ſo evil, as to dare to Preach and Print ſuch enſlaving Doctrines. Nay, now at this very Day its a ſhame to tell how ſuch falſe Prophets uſe the Church of the Great God, by making Her a very Tool and Slave to ſerve their own turns, and to bring their own ends about, not caring what havock they make of the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel.

Mr. *Clifford* on *Pſalm* 51. 4. *pulpits, That Kings, as ſuch are above the Law, have Power to Diſpenſe with the Law at their Pleaſure, and alter Religion at Pleaſure,* pag. 7.

Mr. *J. T*— in his Sermon on *Eccleſ.* 10. 20. declares, *That Reſiſtance in all Caſes, and in all its Degrees and Circumſtances, abſolutely unlawful,* becauſe it ſuppoſes an *Appeal of the People from the King to themſelves,* and makes them Judges of their own Cauſes: for to place Sovereignty, and the laſt Appeal, in all the People together, *is perfect nonſenſe,* becauſe all the People will never be of one mind while the World ſtands, pag. 8. 9. (and I will add, nor all the Clergy.) And yet he is ſo ingenious as to confeſs, *That the Intereſt of a Nation is to be preferred before the Intereſt or Welfare of one Man*: according to *John* 11. 49, 50, 51. *It is expedient for us, that one man dye for the People, and that the whole Nation periſh not.* So that we have a ſure word of Propheſie, that it is the Teſtimony of God himſelf, *That a greater Intereſt of Mankind is to be preferred before a leſſer,* pag. 20, 21.

As perfect nonſenſe as this Prieſt is pleaſed to make Appeals unto the People to be, yet ſo wiſe were the *Roman* State, above Fifty Years before Chriſt's time, and ſo careful of their own Happineſs, Rights, and Intereſts, that they thought it, even then, a moſt prudent Law: And therefore *Publius Valerius* cauſed it to be an Eſtabliſh't Law, *That Appeals ſhould be allowed from any Magiſtrate to the People.* Livy lib. 3. n. 8. *And that no Man ſhould offer to make any Magiſtrate without liberty of Appeal: and if he did, it ſhould be lawful to kill him.* Ibid. lib. 3. n. 34. For which prudent Law they honored him, by adding *Publicola* to his other name.

What the Power of the Firſt Kings were, appears, for that *Ephron,* Chief Prince of the Children of *Heth, would not grant Abraham the poſſeſſion of a Sepulchre in the Land of the Children of Heth, but in the preſence, and with the approbation of the Children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his City,* Gen. 23.

Nor would *Hamor, Prince of the Country, make a League with Jacob, but by the conſent of all that went out of the gate of his City,* Gen. 34. becauſe all the great Concerns of the Governed was referred unto the Common Council and conſent of the People, which in thoſe Empires was eaſily done, which commonly was circumſcribed within one or few Cities. But when Kings began to enlarge their Territories, ſo that all the People could not Aſſemble in one Place without danger of confuſion; there were ordinarily inſtituted *Tribunes* of the People, or Officers of the Kingdom, or of the Governed, to aſſiſt and defend the Rights and Priviledges of the People, granted to them by the Law of God and Nature; and upon great Exigences great Aſſemblies of the Sages of the Governed were aſſembled, as an Epitome of the Univerſal People, were extraordinarily congregated to conſider and conſult thereof.

In the *Iſraelitiſh* Kingdom (which, by conſent and judgment of all Politick Writers, was the beſt conſtituted Government of the World) was the ſame order obſerved; the King had his particular Officers, and the Kingdom theirs; *Seventy one Elders, their Captains choſen out of every Tribe, which both in War and Peace ſhould take care of the whole*; Magiſtrates alſo in *ſingulis Municipiis*: that as they were to take care of the whole, ſo the ſeveral Officers were to take care of their particular Cities and Charges over which they were ſet. For *David called all the Congregation* when he deſired to Inveſt *Solomon* in his Kingdom: when he had reſtored the Policy of that Nation to have it examined and approved, 1 *Chron.* 19. So when *David* was to fetch back the *Ark*, &c. 1 *Chron.* 13. which Officers, becauſe they repreſented the People, it is ſaid, the People came together; *ſo the People reſcued Jonathan, whom Saul had appointed to die*, 1 Sam. 14. 45. by which it appears, *that an Appeal did lie from the King to the People.* So the Kingdom of *Iſrael* was rent from *Rehoboam by the People*; by which it appears, that the *Synedrium of Seventy one at* Jeruſalem, *had the Authority*, that as Kings did judge particular Perſons, ſo theſe had the Power to judge Kings.

The *Hogen-Mogen* words of *Sovereign* and *Supreme*, are but *verba ſolennia*, words of Courſe and Complemental, but confer no Power: what Great and Sovereign Powers Kings by Right have, are given and limited *by Laws of common Conſent, and not Abſolute*: what other Laws of Sovereignty there are of Right that belong to them is paſt all Underſtanding, abſolute Sovereignty in Kings hath no warrant beyond any Divine Law, that belongs only to *God, who is Lord of all the Kingdoms of the Earth.* And though Appeals to all the People may be Nonſence, yet it is very good Senſe to Appeal *to their Epitomy, their Repreſentatives, their Epbori, and Tribunes to the Laws*, and to the *Legiſlators which are the Supreme and Sovereign Power of the Nation*, and have an equal ſhare in making our Laws.

The Commons Houſe, 4 *Car.* 1628, having prepared a Petition to preſent to his Majeſty, ſent it to the Lords for their concurrence; who returned it, adding theſe words, *viz.* [*With due regard to leave intire the Sovereign Power, wherewith your Majeſty is intruſted for the Protection, Safety, and Happineſs of the People.*] Which terms of *Sovereign Power* were ſo diſtaſteful to the Commons, as looking, being free from any condition, and that they were no part of the Law, no Parliamentary words, that they weakned *Magna Charta*, and all our Statutes, that by intendment and implication they might give a Sovereign Power above all thoſe Laws, *&c.* and therefore would by no means admit thereof, tho' ſtrongly conteſted for by the Lords. *Ruſh.* 568.

'Theſe, and ſuch like were the things that made the Parliament in 1641 Remon-'ſtrate to his Majeſty, That the moſt Publick and Solemn Sermons before his Ma-'jeſty, were either to advance Prerogative above Law, or decry the Property of 'the Subject, and thereby lay a foundation of difference between the King and his 'People, or elſe Invectives to make thoſe odious who ſought to maintain the Reli-'gion and Laws of the Kingdom, and to have them weeded out of all Com-'miſſions, or other Imployments of Power in the Government, that the Biſhops and 'others of the Clergy did, by their Suſpenſions, Excommunications, Deprivations, 'and Degradations, of divers painful, learned, and pious Miniſters, oppreſs his Ma-'jeſty's Subjects; that the High Commiſſion Court, and the Courts of the Biſhops 'did exceed in ſharpneſs and ſeverity little leſs than the *Romiſh Inquiſition*, that thoſe 'were fitteſt for Eccleſiaſtical Preferments, and ſooneſt obtained them, who were 'moſt *virulent againſt Godlineſs and Honeſty*, and uſed means to ſuppreſs the Purity 'and Power of Religion, and to increaſe and maintain, ignorance, looſeneſs and 'prophaneſs in the People: that the *Archbiſhops and other Biſhops and Clergy* conti-'nued the Convocation by a new Commiſſion, and turned it to a *Provincial Synod*, 'in which by an unheard of Preſumption; they made Canons that contained in 'them many matters contrary to the Kings Prerogative, to the fundamental Laws 'and Statutes of the Realm, to the Right of Parliaments, to the Property and 'Liberty of the Subject, and matters tending to Sedition, and of dangerous Con-'ſequence; thereby eſtabliſhing their own Uſurpations, juſtifying their Altar-wor-'ſhip, and thoſe other Superſtitions and Innovations, which they formerly intro-'duced without warrant of Law. *They impoſed a new Oath upon divers of his Ma-'jeſty's Subjects, both Eccleſiaſtical and Lay, for maintaining their own Tyranny*, and laid 'a great Tax upon the Clergy, for ſupply of his Majeſty; and generally they 'ſhewed themſelves very affectionate *to the War with Scotland*, (which was the be-

'ginning

'gianing of all our future miſchief,) and by themſelves ſtiled *Bellum Epiſcopale*, all 'their pretended Canons and Conſtitutions were armed with ſeveral cenſures of 'Suſpenſion, Excommunication, Deprivation; by which they would have thruſt out 'all the good Miniſters, and moſt of the well-affected People of the Kingdom, and 'left an eaſie paſſage to their own deſign of Reconciliation with *Rome*. *Remonſtr. Decemb.* 15. 1641.

This is no new way of Remonſtrating againſt ſuch ill Church of *England* Men, deſigning to enſlave a free Kingdom by their Doctrines. For in the Parliament 1625, the Houſe of Commons did Article againſt Mr. *Ric. Montague*, that he might be puniſhed, and his Book burnt, for his impious and profane ſcoffing at Preaching, Meditations, and Conferrences, (which in plain *Engliſh* is Conventickling,) Pulpits, Lectures, Bible, and all ſhew of Religion, and for calling the odious name of *Puritans* on Orthodox Men. *Ruſhworth* 215. 'And in the Parliament 1628, the Com-'mons did Remonſtrate againſt Dr. *Neal*, Biſhop of *Winton*, and *Laud* Biſhop of '*Bath and Wells*, that there hath been no ſmall labouring to remove that which is 'the moſt powerful means to ſtrengthen and increaſe our own Religion, and to 'oppoſe both thoſe, which is the diligent Teaching and Inſtructing in the true 'Knowledge and Worſhip of God; and therefore means have been ſought out to 'depreſs and diſcountenance Pious, Painful, and Orthodox Preachers, how con-'formable ſoever, and Peaceable in their Diſpoſition and Carriage they be; yet 'the preferment of ſuch is oppoſed, and inſtead of being encouraged they are mo-'leſted with vexatious Courſes and Puniſhments, and hardly permitted to Lecture. *Ruſhworth* 215, 633, 634.

What were they alſo in their Opinion, but *high and mighty Church of* England *Men*, againſt whom the Parliament, 4 *Car.* 1628. did Declare and Remonſtrate, 'That with 'a wicked and malicious intention, to ſeduce and miſguide the Conſcience of the 'Kings moſt Excellent Majeſty, touching the obſervation of the Laws and Cu-'ſtoms of this Kingdom, and of the Rights and Liberties of the Subjects, to in-'cenſe his Royal Diſpleaſure againſt his good Subjects, ſo refuſing to ſcandalize, 'ſubvert, and impeach the good Laws and Government of this Realm, and the Au-'thority of the High Court of Parliament, to Alienate his Royal Heart from his 'People, and to cauſe Jealouſies, Sedition, and Diviſion in the Kingdom, who did 'Teach that his Majeſty is not bound to keep and obſerve the good Laws and Cu-'ſtoms of this Realm, concerning the Rights and Liberties of the Subjects. And 'that his Royal Will and Command in impoſing Loans and Taxes, and other Aids 'upon the People without common conſent in Parliament, doth ſo far bind the 'Conſciences of Subjects, that they cannot refuſe the ſame without peril of *Eternal* '*Damnation*; that thoſe who refuſed the Loan did therein offend againſt the Law 'of God, againſt his Majeſty's Supreme Authority, and by ſo doing became guilty 'of Impiety, Diſloyalty, Rebellion, and Diſobedience, and liable to many other 'Taxes and Cenſures; that Authority of Parliament is not neceſſary for the Raiſing 'of Aids and Subſidies. *Ruſh.* 602. *An.* 1628.

'That there was a general fear of ſecret Working and Combination, to intro-'duce into this Kingdom *Innovation and change of our pure Religion*, by Perſons 'much favoured and advanced, not wanting Friends even of the Clergy, near to 'your Majeſty, namely, Dr. *Neal*, Biſhop of *Winchester*, and Dr. *Laud*, Biſhop of *Bath* '*and Wells*, who are juſtly ſuſpected to be unſound in their Opinions that way; It 'being generally held to be the High-way to Preferment and Promotion in the 'Church; many Scholars do bend the courſe of their Studies to maintain thoſe Er-'rors, that their Books and Opinions are ſuffered to be printed and publiſhed, and 'others written againſt them and in defence of the Orthodox Church are hindered 'and prohibited: And we find that there hath been no ſmall labouring to remove that 'which is the moſt powerful means to ſtrengthen and increaſe our own Religion, 'and to oppreſs Popery, which is the diligent Teaching and Inſtruction of the Peo-'ple in the true Knowledg and Worſhip of God, and therefore means have been 'ſought out to depreſs and diſcountenance Pious, Painful, and Orthodox Preach-'ers, peaceable in their Diſpoſition and Carriage, and yet their Preferment of ſuch 'is oppoſed, and inſtead of being encouraged they are moleſted with vexatious 'courſes and purſuits, hardly permitted to Lecture, 602, 632, 634. 1628.

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum
Quæ peperit ſæpè ſceleratæ atque impia facta. 195.

And

And our high and mighty Church of *England* Men did in our memories ſo ſupercilioufly manage their own haughty Reſolutions, that they neceſſitated the Parliament to take away their High Commiſſion and their Parliamentary Priviledge, forbidding them to meddle with any Temporal Affairs: And I do not find that they are grown much more prudent yet, for that they manage themſelves in this intricate juncture of time at ſuch a rate that all Mens Mouths are ready, and ſtand half cockt againſt them, and I fear may in time provoke the Parliament to do the like or more again, they monopolizing all Government over others of themſelves, which is far from being Apoſtolical; for in the Apoſtles times, and divers Ages after, all the People being under the inſpection of one Biſhop (vulgarly the the Paſtor of a Pariſh) were wont to meet together, not only for Worſhip, but other Church Adminiſtrations; all publick Acts paſſed at the Aſſemblies of the whole People, they were conſulted with, their concurrence was thought neceſſary, and their preſence required, that nothing might paſs without their Cognizance, Satisfaction, and Conſent.

This was obſerved not only in Election of Biſhops, Prieſts, and Officers, but in Ordination and Cenſures, in Admiſſion of Members, and Reconciling of Penitents, and in Debates and Conſultations about other Emergencies: but not one plain word in Scripture that one Apoſtle was ſubject to another, nor one gathered Church ſubject to another, or that any Man had lawful Authority to forbid Aſſembling of the Brethren together, whether with or without a Prieſt.

In ſumm, when Prieſt-craft had enlarged their Territories beyond their ancient Bounds, (which was but one Pariſh, or a ſelect Number, ſcarce exceeding 150 or 200,) unto many, whereby they became Cardinals and Dioceſans, *&c.* They thereby cajoled the People of their undoubted Rights and Priviledges, and neceſſarily introduced an eſſential change of the True and Primitive Government of the Church ſet up by Chriſt, and ſet up one to fit their own turn and ends. In the very next Ages ſucceeding the Apoſtles, (and ſo for 400 Years and more) one Pariſh or ſingle Congregation was thought ſufficient for one Biſhop or Paſtor, ſo that as Chriſtians multiplied, ſo ſeparate Congregations, Biſhops, or Paſtors; ſo that there were as many Paſtors or Biſhops as there were ſeveral Congregations, or Churches in a Province, and not one Church or Congregation ſubject to the Laws, Uſages, or Ordinances of any other. No Churches gathered by St. *Paul* were ſubject to thoſe gathered by St. *Peter*, nor *è contra* of them, or of any other of the Apoſtles, or of any Churches gathered by their Succeſſors. Hence came ſeveral and diverſity of Rites and Uſages in the Ancient Churches, without being accounted Schiſmaticks, Separatiſts, Non-cons, or Phanaticks, and with perfect Love, Unity, and Uniformity, becauſe they held the ſame Faith and Doctrine. And 150, or 200 Souls, was thought as many as one Biſhop or one Paſtor could take charge and give a good account of. So that a ſingle Congregation, or gathered Church, was eſteemed a competent Charge for an Epiſcopal Paſtor; for the Epiſcopal Churches were daily multiplied, and each Church had Power to govern and order it ſelf, and ſo followed ſuch orders as every Church or gathered Congregation thought fit without being obliged to conform to thoſe of any other Church or Congregation: they had no Rule or Order in things of this nature requiring obſervance, or did they regard ſuch Uniformity as later Ages have been fond of, to the prejudice of the Unity and Peace of the Church, even to the perſecuting of Righteous Men in our Kingdoms, none of thoſe Churches uſed the ſame Prayers, all of them had not the ſame Creeds, they had not the ſame Rites in Baptiſm, or the Lord's Supper, nor the ſame way in Confirming, Marrying, or Burying: they uſed not the ſame mode either in reading the Scriptures, or Singing; they obſerved not the ſame methods in admitting Members, or preparing them for the Communion, neither proceeding to Cenſures or reconciling Penitents: they differed alſo in their Habits and Poſtures, they varied in their Faſts, both for time and manner, and obſerved not the ſame Feſtivals: This was the Uniformity of the more Pure and Primitive times, and no Perſecution enſued; no Appeals allowed from one Biſhop, or one Congregation to another: So that the Uniformity the latter Ages have been ſo fond of, is a down-right Novelty and Innovation, which hath broken the Bond of Charity and Unity, and inſtead thereof hath brought in Animoſities, Diviſions, and Separations, nay, Perſecutions on God's Holy People, very unworthy and unbeſeeming Chriſtian Paſtors, to make ſuch actings more their buſineſs than the ſuppreſſings of Sin, and promoting of real and ſtrict Holineſs.

All

All this, and much more, is ſo plain in ancient Writers, that none but Novices and Chits in Story can be ignorant hereof. If you will believe one of the greateſt Prelates of the Weſt, and at no leſs than 600 Years diſtance from Chriſt: *In una fide nihil officit Sanctæ Eccleſiæ diverſa conſuetudo*, ſaith *Gregory* the firſt; where there is one Faith its no harm to the Church if there be diverſity of uſages, *i. e.* the Church hath no harm for want of Uniformity.

And before him *Innocent* the firſt, who lived about the Second Century, in his *Epiſt. ad Decen.* writes, that *diverſè in diverſis locis vel Eccleſiis obtineri aut celebrari videntur.*

To the Juſtification whereof, and to the conſtant Practice thereof, even from the Days of the Apoſtles unto this very Day, gives abundant Teſtimony the Churches of the *Vaudois* (called *Waldenſes*, *Albigenſes*, poor Men of *Lyons*, *Chaignard*, *Tramontani*, *Lollards*, *Siccari*, *Fraticelli*, *Gazares*, *Turlepini*, *&c.* and for their Simplicity, Purity, and Sincerity termed *Evangelical*, having been for many Hundreds of Years injured, reproached, deſpiſed, baniſhed, excommunicated, anathematized, Goods confiſcated, tortured, wearing Miters in deriſion, reviled, ſpit upon, Ears cropt, their Fleſh pincht off with Pincers, drawn with Horſes, drag'd up and down, broiled, roaſted, ſtoned to death, burnt, drowned, diſmembred, ſmothered in Caves by helliſh *Papiſts*, &c.) who have preſerved themſelves from the infection of External Miniſtries of other Churches, defiled with infinite human invention. It being the Tenth Article of their Belief, *viz.* That the inventions of Men are an unſpeakable abomination before God. And their cuſtom is, That if any of their Barbes, their Paſtors, ſhall fall into any foul or unclean Sin, he is caſt out of their company, and forbidden the Charge of Preaching. They Teach alſo, Article 15. 'That becauſe the differences of Ceremonies, Cuſtoms, and Rites, which are 'uſed in ſeveral Churches, and are not prejudicial or hurtful to Piety, they ought 'not to be offended one with another, or contemn, hate, and perſecute one ano-'ther. And *Ph. Melanctbon* is of the ſame mind in his Epiſtle to Mr. *Benedict* and the reſt of the *Waldenſes*, viz. 'that no difference and variety of Rites and Ceremo-'nies ought to diſunite our Minds.

Now, if the Churches of the *Valleys* have been Celebrated through all Ages of the Church, as they have been and are yet even to this day, as the Worſhippers of God in the greateſt Purity and Simplicity, and neareſt the Purity and Simplicity of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the leaſt tainted with *Romiſh* Superſtitions and human Inventions, with what Face can Proteſtants Perſecute Proteſtants for things indifferent, deſiring to Worſhip God in the ſame Simplicity, Purity and Sincerity?

If the true Church of *England* be to be known by her Faith, Doctrine, Articles, and Sacraments, then beyond all contradiction the Non-con Presbyters and Independants are more truly right Church of *England* Men, (maugre all the Obloquies and ungrounded Prejudices againſt them) than thoſe that ſo imperiouſly appropriate and uſurp that Name to themſelves; and happily a more ſincere Homogeneal part of the Church Catholick, without infringing Unity of Faith or true Doctrine. But if Ceremonies or Uſages not preſcribed nor uſed by Chriſt or his Apoſtles in the pureſt Times muſt make the diſtinction, then certainly their Non-conformity is more agreeable to the Practice of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the Primitive Times, than the Ceremonial Uſages and Practices of theſe later Ages: for it muſt appear upon due examination, that there was not one Ceremony either uſed or commanded in their times, and yet Converts as many, and then it will certainly and undeniably follow, that all thoſe Ceremonies introduced ſince, are Innovations; and conſequently, thoſe that impoſe them on Severities and Cenſures are the Innovators and Separatiſts, I had almoſt ſaid Schiſmaticks; tho' ſome with Brows of Braſs have caſt thoſe odious Names on the *Presbyters* and *Independants*. For thoſe that impoſe Rites and Ceremonies, no ways Eſſential to the ſaving of Souls, on Penalties and Severities, eſpecially unto Silencing and Suſpenſion, to which conſcientious Perſons cannot ſubmit, muſt be the Schiſmaticks, or elſe our Separation from *Rome* can hardly be juſtified.

If ſuch Tenets and Practices muſt be the Teſt and Character of true Church of *England* Men, I muſt confeſs my ſelf not as yet ſo well qualified; and I believe few others yet are more true Church of *England* Men: for, indeed, I have no mind to make Religion lackey and hunt after earthly ends and purpoſes, leſt by partaking with other Mens Sins I ſhould receive of their Plagues alſo: but

by ſuch Practices it is plain, *that they are not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael.* The true Church of *England* Men are Men of better Principles, and more Honeſty, both Biſhops and others, who do comply conſcientiouſly with the Innocent Ceremonies of our Church without Reviling, Slandering, Perſecuting, or Diſturbing thoſe who do as conſcientiouſly Preach the ſame Goſpel in Sincerity, tho' in Conventicles, without any Ceremonies, *as Chriſt and his Apoſtles did.*

That the Churches of Chriſt are miſerably rent and torn cannot be denied; and that the breaches thereof hath proceeded from the Pride, Ambition, Lazineſs, Uncharitableneſs, and Contentions of the Clergy, have been the chief cauſe thereof is as true. The renting of Chriſt's ſeamleſs Coat began even in the days *of the Apoſtles*, who rebuked them who ſaid, *I am of Paul, I am of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Chriſt*; *as if Chriſt had been divided*, 1 Cor. 1. 22. And therefore *Paul* beſought them by the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *That they would all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions amongſt them: but that they be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment*, ver. 10. For whereas there is *among you envying, and ſtrife, and diviſion, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? Who then is Paul? and who is Apollo? but Miniſters by whom yee believed*, 1 Cor. 3. 3, 4, 5. And it is well known, that the wiſeſt and moſt peaceable Men, (tho' of different Perſwaſions, as Proteſtants, Papiſts, and others,) are of Opinion, that *Conſtantine* and other Pious Emperours endowing the Clergy with great Powers, Priviledges, Honours, Offices, Dignities, and Preferments, hath been the occaſion of the Pride, Luxury, Tyranny, Uncharitableneſs, and Lazineſs of the Clergy; and conſequently, *the bane and deſtruction of true Holineſs, Purity and Simplicity, that ought to be in the Clergy*, they being as Baits, Snares, Allurements, and Temptations, to ſeek and hunt after them, and ſo to neglect to ſeek the Kingdom of God in the firſt place as they ought to do. I may alſo ſay with many other wiſe and peaceable minded Men, as a very great truth, *That as through pride cometh contention*, Prov. 13. 10. ſo through the Pride and Haughtineſs of the Clergy, more havock hath been made of Love, Charity, Purity, Sincerity, and Simplicity of the Goſpel, than all the bloody Perſecutions that have been in the World.

It is the Opinion of learned and judicious Mr. *Jo. Hales* in his Tract of Schiſm, 'That were Liturgies and publick Forms of Service ſo framed as that they admit-'ted not of particular and private Fancies, but contained only ſuch things as in 'which all Chriſtians do agree on: And the event ſhall be, that the Publick Ser-'vice and Honour of God ſhall no ways ſuffer. Whereas to load our Publick Forms 'with the private Fancies upon which we differ, is the moſt ſovereign way to per-'petuate Schiſm unto the Worlds end. Prayer, Confeſſion, Thankſgiving, Reading, 'and Expoſition of Scriptures, Adminiſtration of Sacraments in the plaineſt and 'ſimpleſt manner, were matter enough to furniſh out a ſufficient Liturgy, tho' no-'thing either of private or Church Pomp, of Garments, of preſcribed Geſtures, of 'Imagery, of Muſick, of matter concerning the Dead, of many Superfluities, which 'creep into the Churches under the name of Order and Decency did interpoſe it-'ſelf. For to charge Churches and Liturgies with things unneceſſary, was the be-'ginning of all Superſtition; and when ſcruples of Conſcience began to be made, 'or pretended, then Schiſms began to break in. If the Spiritual Guides and Fathers 'of the Church would be a little ſparing, of incumbring Churches with ſuperfluities, 'and not over-rigid in either reviving obſolete Cuſtoms, or impoſing new, there were 'far leſs danger of Schiſm or Superſtition, and all the inconveniences likely to 'enſue would be but this, they ſhould in ſo doing yield a little to the Imbecillity 'of Inferiors; a thing which St. *Paul* would never have refuſed to do. Mean while 'whereſoever falſe and ſuſpected Opinions are made a piece of the Church Liturgy, 'he that ſeparates is not the Schiſmatick, for that is a like unlawful, to make Pro-'feſſion of known or ſuſpected Falſhoods, as to put in practice unlawful or ſuſpect 'Actions.

Much of the ſame Opinion is Biſhop *Uſher*, 'If at this day we ſhould take a Sur-'vey of the ſeveral Profeſſions of Chriſtianity that have any large ſpread in any 'part of the World, (as of the Religion of the *Romans*, and the Reformed Churches 'in our Quarters; of the *Egyptians* and *Ethiopians* in the *South*; of the *Gracians*, and 'other Chriſtians in the *Eaſt*,) and ſhould put by the Points wherein they differ 'one from another, and gather from one Body the reſt of the Articles wherein they 'all did generally agree, we ſhould find, that in thoſe Propoſitions, which without 'Controverſie are Univerſally received in the whole Chriſtian World; ſo much

Truth

'Truth is contained, that being joyned with Holy Obedience, may be ſufficient to 'bring Men into everlaſting Salvation. His Sermon on *Epheſ.* 4. 13. preached before his Majeſty. 1624.

If our Eccleſiaſtical Grandees in the laſt Reformation of our Liturgy had been of St. *Paul*'s mind, (as they ought to have been) and not abuſe their Power in the Goſpel; *who, though he was free from all Men, yet made himſelf Servant unto all, that he might gain the more; to the Jew, a Jew; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law; to them that are without the Law, as without the Law,* [*being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Chriſt.*] *To the weak as weak: and was made all things to all men, that by any means he might ſave ſome. And this he did for the Goſpel ſake,* 1 Cor. 9. 18, 23. *And by his ſo doing, he gave no offence neither to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: but he pleaſed all men in all things, not ſeeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be ſaved,* chap. 10. ver. 32, 33. There had been no complaining of our Prelates, nor any matter left to pick quarrels withall, and the Kingdom much happier than now it is; which Doctrine of Compliance is to be underſtood only of things indifferent. And our Non-cons deſire but the like in things indifferent. Sure if St. *Paul*, ſo much a more excellent Perſon than our Pontiffs, held it his Duty thus to comply, it would be no diſparagement to our Prelates to do the ſame.

Certainly none will dare to aver, That our *Conventicles, quatenus Conventicles,* are unlawful, but unlawful only upon Preſumptions, and ungrounded Prejudices, and Surmizes that their Non-conformiſt Teachers (moſtly Presbyterians or Independants) do teach or foment Rebellion, Schiſm, Faction. Now if in truth they are not guilty of ſuch Crimes, but their good Converſation is falſly abuſed by them, 1 *Pet.* 3. 16. What have ſuch Conformiſt Church of *England* Men to anſwer for themſelves, that ſo ſlander them by laying ſuch Crimes to their charge as they are no ways guilty of, and in their Pulpits, out of which nothing ſhould be Preach'd, but what is as true as Goſpel?

One Mr. *J. T.* in his Sermon on *Eccl.* 10. 20. *pag.* 29, 31. hath ſo hard thoughts of them, as to believe, *That we ſhall never be free of a Plot, if not againſt the Life of the King, yet againſt the Peace, and Honour of his Government, ſo long as there is one Conventicle in* England *left. And that as it is Death by the Laws of this Nation, for a* Popiſh *Prieſt to be ſeen upon* Engliſh *Ground; ſo it would be very well, if it were ſo for a Non-conforming one too.* Very Ghoſtly Councel to come from a Miniſter of the Goſpel of Peace! I could wiſh that he, and thoſe of the like Junto, did underſtand their Prieſthood as it ought to be underſtood, then they would Preach things that now were Holy, Pure, Peaceable, and of good Report, without ſuch Traſh.

This Gentleman is not alone in theſe ſtabbing Cenſures, there are more of his Quire that ſing to the like Tune, a temper very ill becoming Preachers of the Goſpel of Peace.

One other, Mr. *M. B.* (commonly known in the Univerſity by the Character of his Majeſty's *D——ee Chaplain* was turned out (for what it's a ſhame to tell) tho' ſince crept in again,) in his Sermon on *Luke* 19. 14. tells us, That among *Phanaticks* (a new Nick-name for old *Puritans,*) *their Loyalty is Rebellion, and their Religion is Treaſon; and whoſe very Goſpel is the Myſtery of Iniquity: and that amongſt Phanaticks and Atheiſts,* transformed into malitious Fiends, by the Helliſh divinity of *that Monſter of a Prieſt, the Author of* Julian the Apoſtate, *whoſe whole Book is as great an Apoſtacy from the Practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, the Precepts of Obedience delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and Chriſtianity it ſelf, as ever* Julian *was guilty of,* pag. 19. As falſe a Scandal as a Prieſt of *Baal* could pulpit. Theſe are your *Boanarges,* pure Church of *England* Men in their right Colours and *Pontificalibus.* Nay, the unclean Spirits, like the *Frogs that came out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe Prophet; which are the Spirits of Devils, which go forth unto the Kings of the Earth,* &c. *Rev.* 16. 13, 14. who are not content falſly to Calumniate the Non-cons only, but to Stigmatize alſo true *Nathaniels.* Witneſs *M. B.* charging, *as a profligate Wretch, and mercenary Scribler, the late Writer of* Julian the Apoſtate; *of which Charge, the generality, and beſt, and wiſeſt, both of Clergy and Laiety, do now acquit, and juſtifie him to be the more Orthodox, by their Pulpits, Prints, and Practices.* Sure, ſure, Pulpits were never deſigned to ſpit Venome, nor falſly to Calumniate any, eſpecially for Printing and Publiſhing Goſpel-truths, *as that of lawful Reſiſtance and Paſſive Obedience:* which Doctrines the generality of the Nation, *Lords, Commons, Biſhops, Prieſts, Clergy, and Laiety,* now own and practice; and which was

ever

ever the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and of all ſonnd Divines, tho' metamorphoſiſed and miſrepreſented by ſome Pungril Church of *England* Men, as thwarting their ſublunary deſigns of Pride, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Honours, and Preferments, very ill becoming that moſt excellent Spirit that ought to be in true Goſpel Preachers. For in the end ſuch Pulpiteers do but foam out their own Shame, daring in that Sacred Place to do more than *Michael the Arch-Angel, who contending with the Devil himſelf, durſt not bring a railing accuſation againſt him.* But I hope their Eyes are now inlightned by ſeeing that deſtructive Doctrine baſled by a Miriad of Prieſts and Pulpits, which the former Government would not bear, and yet the true Doctrine of *Paſſive Obedience*, with its juſt Limits and Qualifications, remains as true and as firm in the Church of *England* as ever.

Theſe Prieſts are not alone in vilely Characterizing our Conventicles; for if you conſult our Sermons of late Years, eſpecially thoſe Preached on certain Solemn Days, as thoſe on the 30th of *January*, on the 9th of *Sept.* 1683, and the like, you will find them generally be-ſpattering our Conventicles, either in broad glances, or plain terms, as tho' it were the buſineſs of Chriſtianity to revile and perſecute Men for their Conſciences differing from them in ſmall things; and thoſe indeterminate by plain places of Scriptures. Whether the Characters that theſe Men, and thoſe of the ſame *quorum*, or the Character that I have given of them be the trueſt, I appeal to God and the whole Nation: however I have this for my Juſtification, or at leaſt for Extenuation, *viz.* the ſeveral Addreſſes of ſeveral Parliaments to the King on their behalf and againſt their Perſecutors. And if I am in an Error, it is an Error on the Right-hand, to judge them Pious that ſeem ſo, tho' in truth they were not ſo: I am no diſcerner of Hearts, God only knows them; *but Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things, and covereth a multitude of faults.* This good Opinion of mine of them is not without the Teſtimony of many of their grave, ſober, pious, peaceable, learned, and underſtanding Auditors averring the ſame; and that they conſtantly pray as fervently and heartily for the King, Church, and State, as any Conformiſt Church of *England* Prieſts. And which is yet more demonſtrable, their Sermons and Works in Print manifeſt the ſame to all the World, as the Works of Dr. *Bates*, Dr. *Owen*, *Tho. Godwin*, *R. Baxter*, *R. Allen*, and a hundred more, which declare to all the World their Sentiments, their Learning, and their Piety, wherein they are as Orthodox as other true Church of *England* Men are, tho' neither one nor the other are Infallible. And muſt we after ſuch Teſtimonies and Demonſtration of their Abilities, their Soundneſs of Doctrine, their Labours and Endeavours for Holy Living and Converſation, eſteem them as *Monſters of Prieſts*, revile them, take up evil Reports againſt them, and load them with the guilt of all the late horrid Rebellious Plots, the Aſſociation, Fire at *New Market*, the *Rye*, and that of the late Duke of *Monmouth*, without infallible Proof and Demonſtration? Sure, ſure, this ought not to be. What if ſome few of many hundreds have been ſo phanatick, ſo mad, to ingage in ſome or all of theſe Rebellions, muſt all the reſt be eſteemed guilty therefore? Sure this can be no Righteous Judgment. Were all the Eleven Apoſtles Traitors becauſe *Judas* was? Happily, if a fair computation could be made, there would be found guilty of ſome or of all theſe Rebellions, many more Atheiſtical Debauchees, and ill-lived Perſons, than *Conventiclers* or *Non-conformiſts.*

Mr. *J. T.* himſelf, for all his hard Speeches againſt them, *is not ſo uncharitable as to believe, but that moſt of the Diſſenters knew nothing of the Duke of* Monmouth*'s Deſign; yet he is certain, that if it had taken effect, they would all have ſided with the Conſpirators againſt the Laws, the Monarchy, and the Church of* England, *pag.* 29. *Though the Hearts of Men are deceitful above all things*, yet it ſeems this Church of *England* Prieſt knows them all. I know the Opinion that the high Church of *England* Men have of the Non-conformiſts in general, is, *that of Villanies, the well-meaning Zealots* (it's well known whom they mean thereby) *are the moſt dangerous.* So the *Eccleſiaſtical Politician.*

If we reflect on the ſevere Reprimands and Cenſures laid upon *Sibthorp* and *Manwaring* for their deſtructive Principles and Doctrines of Government, and the Remonſtrances of a Kingdom repreſented in a Parliament againſt thoſe, that diſcountenanced good and Pious Miniſters of the Goſpel, and their Aſſembling, one would think ſhould for ever have deterred all future Ages from entertaining any ſuch like Principles again, and from diſcouraging and diſcountenancing Aſſemblies meeting only to ſerve God, and to ſave their own Souls. But I ſee *Hogen-Mogen*

Church

Church of *England* Men will be ſo ſtill, maugre all the Judgments, Cenſures, and Puniſhments, that a whole Kingdom can inflict upon them.

If our Conventicles are ſuch as are repreſented, Factious, Rebellious, Schiſmatical, why do not our Tory Prieſts aſſemble themſelves, and teach and practiſe better things? But to be like Dogs in the Manger, neither eat Hay, nor let the Horſes eat: neither aſſemble themſelves, nor ſuffer others that would, is no Character of a good Shepherd. As it cannot be denied, that God requires his Worſhip to be Publick, and Celebrated in great Congregations *in the beauty of Holineſs*, as in *Temples, Altars, Forms of Service, Set times*, &c. *ſo it cannot be denied, that God requires the inward and private Devotions, both in Heart, Cloſet, and Houſes; and that all Aſſemblings of Chriſtians for Mutual and Reciprocal help of Piety and Devotion whereſoever, and by whomſoever Celebrated, ought to be permitted without exception or ſtint.*

It is a ſhame to publiſh it, but it is a ſad truth, that the Pride, and Haughtineſs of the Clergy in all Ages, and the Villanous Doctrines they teach concerning *Kingly Powers and their own*, have abuſed, and ſeduced, and miſguided Kings into all Miſgovernments, *viz. That Kings have an Arbitrary Power from above, to direct what Laws, and to take what Tribute they pleaſe; that they have Power to bind the Conſciences of their Subjects to the Religion they think beſt; that they are unaccountable to any on Earth; and that all private Conſciences muſt be ſubject to the publick Conſcience; without which they are no better than Statues, and Images of Authority:* Theſe, and worſe, if worſe may be, are the frequent Documents of our high Church of *England* Mens Pulpits, and Prints, which are deſtructive to all Governments and human Societies: So that upon the whole matter, it is no matter what Religion, or what Government God hath eſtabliſhed, but what Kings and Princes command.

Theſe *Tory* Church of *England* Men have no conſideration how eaſily *uncontrolable Authority* degenerates into *Tyranny*, till the Poor have ſcarſe a hole to hide their Heads in, or a rag to cloath their naked Backs, or a morſel of Bread to fill their hungry Bowels. *Maſterleſs Power on Earth* is apt to make even *Kings* to forget their King and Judge in Heaven; as if Providence ſlept *becauſe Judgment is not ſpeedily executed.* Conſider it all ye that forget God, and remember *that the Redeemer of the oppreſſed is mighty*, and never more ready to avenge the Cauſe of the *innocent and oppreſſed*, than when it is moſt neglected by his *Vice-gerents. Ahab* and *Jezabel* exerciſed in *Iſrael* Authority without controul. *Who ſhould puniſh the oppreſſion of Naboth?* the Lord takes the Cauſe into his own Hand, *and cauſeth Dogs to lick his Blood in the very place where they licked the innocent Blood of Naboth; and the Dogs did eat the Fleſh of Jezabel, that curſed Woman, by the wall of Jezreel:* ſo there is Blood for Blood, and an utter extinction of *Ahab's poſterity*, 1 Kings 21. *lege Taleonis.*

M. B. in his Sermon before his Majeſty on the 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. lays down for a ſure Rule, *That it is the Duty of private Men to ſubmit their Judgments, in matters of Religion, to the Determinations of thoſe whom God hath conſtituted to be their Spiritual Guides and Governours, unleſs it manifeſtly appears that ſuch Determinations are contrary to God's Word*, pag. 6. And ſo we are if any * *private Man* teach another any Truths, and to believe the private Man before any Spiritual Guides or Governours that preach and teach Untruths, and every Man for himſelf is the proper Judge of what is taught. The Apoſtles themſelves, tho' infallible, ſubmitted their Doctrines to the Judgment of their Diſciples. *Judge ye*, Acts 4. 19. 1 Cor. 10. 15. and ſo muſt our Guides and Governors; which he would inſinuate here to be the Clergy, *i. e.* Biſhops and Prieſts; if ſo, he will be miſtaken: they are only *Officers in the Church to Teach, Baptize*, &c. but the Church, in the trueſt ſenſe, (*i. e.* the whole Congregation of the Faithful) is *to govern its own Body, and the Officers thereof*, not the Officers the Church; which will not pleaſe.

* Apollos *Miniſter of Cæſarea and of Iconia, was an Eloquent Man, mighty in the Scripture, inſtructed in the way of the Lord, fervent in the Spirit, who ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord; and ſpake boldly in the Synagogue: and yet* Aquila *and* Priſcilla *his Wife, Tent-makers, when they heard him, took him home, and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly*, Acts 18. 24, 25, 26.

The Eccleſiaſtical Politician declares, *That it is abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Government of the World, that the Supreme Magiſtrate of every Commonwealth ſhould be veſted with a Power to Govern and Conduct the Conſciences of Subjects in Affairs of Religion*, pag. 10. How is it poſſible, that the *Supreme Magiſtrate*, and our *Spiritual Guides and Governors, ſhould both have the guide of our Conſciences? And that Peace and Tranquillity of Commonwealth, being the prime and moſt important end of Government, can never be ſufficiently ſecured, unleſs Religion be ſubject to the Authority of the*

Supreme Power, pag. 11. *And unleſs Princes have Power to bind their Subjects to that Religion that they apprehend moſt advantageous to publick Peace and Tranquillity, and reſtrain thoſe Religious miſtakes that tend to its ſubverſion, they are no better than Statues and Images of Authority*, pag. 12. *For it is clear* (if this Eccleſiaſtical Politician may be believed) *that a Prince is endued with a Power to conduct Religion, and that muſt be ſubject to his Dominion as well as other Affairs of State*, pag. 13. The conſequence of which Doctrines are, That if *Nebuchadnezzar* erect his prodigious Idol, *and upon pain of a fiery Furnace require all to Worſhip it; all People, Nations, and Languages, muſt preſently be upon their Faces:* and for their warrant for ſo doing, he aſſures them, *That in Caſes and Diſputes of publick concernment, private Men are not properly* ſui Juris, *they have no Power over their own Actions, they are not to be directed by their own Judgments, or determined by their own Wills; but by the Commands and Determinations of the publick Conſcience. And if there be any ſin in the command, he that impoſed it ſhall anſwer for it, and not I whoſe Duty is to obey: the commands of Authority will warrant my Obedience, my Obedience will hallow, or at leaſt excuſe my Action, and ſo ſecure me from Sin, if not from Error: becauſe I follow the beſt Guide, and moſt probable Direction I am capable of: and tho' I may miſtake, my Integrity ſhall perſerve my Innocence. In all doubtful and diſputable Caſes, it is better to err with Authority, than to be in the right againſt it; and therefore in all ſuch matters their Commands are the Supreme Rule of Conſcience: not only becauſe the danger of a little Error* (and ſo it is if it be diſputable,) *is over-weighed by the importance of the great Duty of Obedience, but becauſe they are the fitteſt Judges*, pag. 308, 309.

What is this but down-right aſſerting the abominable Papal Doctrines of *Probability* and of *blind Obedience?* brave Doctrines for a *Tory* Church of *England* Man to Preach and Print *impuné*. Good God! whether are we poſting? I thank God I have been taught better things, *viz. Every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God*, Rom. 14. 12. *The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*, Ezek. 28. 20. *The ſoul of the publick conſcience ſhall not be put to death for the ſins of the private; nor the ſouls of private conſciences be put to death for the ſins of the publick: but every man ſhall be put to death for his own ſin*, Deut. 24. 16.

Daw-Divines! to Print that the publick Conſcience ſhall ſtand between the private Conſcience (ſinning by his Command) and the Judgment of the great Day, and excuſe from Sin. I thank God that I have been taught by true Church of *England* Men indeed, *that God never created Men, nor ever endued them with Conſciſciences, or gave them Talents of Reaſon or Judgment, ſubject and enſlaved to the Judgment, Conſcience, or Reaſon of others; but hath endued and truſted every Man with his own proper Talent of Conſcience, Reaſon, and Judgment to chuſe for himſelf; according to which only he ſhall be judged, and ſtand or fall at the Day of Judgment: and not according to any publick Conſcience.* There would be very little need of Prieſts, if blind Obedience ought to prevail, and not our own free choice.

He proceeds and tells us, *That God hath appointed the Magiſtrates to be his Truſtees and Officials here upon Earth, to act and determine in moral Virtues and pious Devotions, according to all accidents and emergencies of Affairs, to aſſign new particulars of the Divine Law, to declare new bounds of right and wrong, which the Law of God neither doth nor can limit*, pag. 18. *That its abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Happineſs of Kingdoms, that there be ſet up a more ſevere Government over Mens Conſciences, and Religions, and Perſwaſions, than over their Vices and Immoralities.* Preface to his Eccl. Pol. p. 53. *And that Princes may with leſs hazard give liberty to Mens Vices and Debaucheries than to their Conſciences*, pag. 55. I have heard it alſo preached before the King, *That it is better to offend in Doctrine than in Diſcipline.* Sure much Learning, or Haughty Pride, and Ambition, Self-ends, and Intereſt, hath made theſe Men mad. And ſo fulfilled the Prophecy of *Hoſea* 9. 7. *The Prophet is a fool, and the Spiritual man mad. Sure God hath turned theſe wiſe* Eccleſiaſtical Polititians *backwards, and made their knowledge fooliſh*, Iſai. 44. 25.

However I will ſay thus much to them, *That Liberty of Conſcience is undeniably the right of every true Believer*, viz. *to judge of ſuch things as belong chiefly to the knowledge and ſervice of God, whether they are above the reach and light of Nature*, (and therefore liable to be variouſly underſtood by human Reaſon,) *or enjoyned or forbidden by Divine Precept, and to follow that full perſwaſion whereby every one is aſſured, that his Belief and Practice, as far as he is able to apprehend, is according to the Will of God, and his Holy Spirit within him*; which undoubtedly we ought to follow, much rather than any publick Conſcience or Law of Man, Magiſtrate, or not Magiſtrate, as both the

Word

Word of God bids us, and the very dictate of Reaſon tells us, *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.* And we have no other outward Divine Rule to judge by than the Scriptures, nor no other within us but the illumination of the Spirit, ſo interpreting that Scripture as warrantably only unto our ſelves, which commands us to *ſearch the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things are ſo*, Acts 17. 11. and gives us Reaſon alſo, *let every man prove his own* (not his Magiſtrates) *work, and then ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf alone, and not in another*, (tho' publick Conſcience,) *for every man ſhall bear his own burden*, Gal. 6. 4, 5. Is it not falſe Doctrine in the Papiſts, to teach that Believers only, as the Church believes, are diſcharged in God's Account? Is it not the general conſent of ſound Proteſtants, that neither Traditions, Councils, nor Canons of any viſible Church, much leſs any Edicts of any Magiſtrate or Civil Seſſion, but the Scripture only can be the final Judge or Rule in matters of Religion? and that only in the Conſcience of every Chriſtian to himſelf. For if the Church be not ſufficient to be implicitly and blindly believed, (as certain it is not) what can there elſe be named of more Authority than the Church, but the Conſcience, than which God only is greater? 1 *John* 3. 20. But if any ſhall pretend that the Scripture judges to his Conſcience for other Men, (as this proud and ſaucy Politician doth,) he makes himſelf greater than the Church, Scripture, or Conſciences of other Men: a preſumption too high for any mortal, ſince every true Chriſtian, able to give a reaſon of his Faith, hath the *word of God before him, the promiſed holy Spirit, and the mind of Chriſt within him*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 16.. A much better and ſafer guide of Conſcience, than this Polititian in publick Conſcience, who in this is no leſs a Pope than the Pope at *Rome*. *The Spiritual man judgeth all things, but himſelf is judged of no man*, 1 Cor. 2. 15. And is not the Pope deſervedly eſteemed *Antichriſtian*, for appropriating to himſelf ſuch Infallibity over both Conſcience and Scripture? Whether tends all this? but to make themſelves to *have Dominion over our Faith, and Lords over God's Heritage*; which the Apoſtles utterly diſclaimed, and accounted themſelves *only helpers of our joy, and to be feeders of the flock not by conſtraint, but willingly*, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. 2 Cor. 1. 24.

If Biſhop *Saunderſon* can judge, *The Word of God doth expreſly forbid us to ſubject our Conſciences to the Judgment of any other, or to uſurp Dominion over the Conſciences of any other.* Saunderſon's 10 Lectures 1660. v. 3. Lect. 30. §. p. 103.

None but God alone hath Power to impoſe a Law upon the Conſcience of any Man, to which it ought to be ſubjected as obliging by it ſelf. For there is but one Law-giver, who can both ſave and deſtroy, James 4. 12. *not one picked out amongſt many, not one above many, but one excluſively*, i. e. *one, and but one onely*; *who art thou that doſt judge another? Is doth not belong to thee to thruſt thy ſawcy Sickle into the Harveſt of another Man, much leſs to fling thy ſelf into the Throne of Almighty God: to him it belongeth alone to judge of the Conſciences of Men, to whom alone it doth belong to impoſe Laws on the Conſciences of men; which none can do but God alone.* Conſcientiis Dominari velle eſt Arcem Cœli invadere, *ſaid* Maximilian *the firſt*; *To exerciſe a Domination over Conſciences, is to invade the Power of Heaven. He is a plunderer of the Glory of God, and an uſurper of that Tower that is due unto him, that claims a right to the Conſciences of Men, or practiſe an uſurpation over them.* v. Lect. 4. §. 9, 10, 11.

He tells us moreover, That if Princes will be Reſolute, (and if they will Govern, ſo they muſt be) they may eaſily make the moſt ſtubborn Conſciences to bend to their Reſolutions, *pag.* 271. *Princes muſt be ſure to bind on at firſt their Eccleſiaſtical Laws with the ſtraiteſt knot, and afterwards keep them in force by the ſeverity of their execution*, pag. 221. *So eaſie is it for Men to deſerve to be puniſhed for their Conſciences, that there is no Nation in the World in which (were Government rightly underſtood, and duly managed,) miſtakes and abuſes of Religion would not ſupply the Gallies with vaſtly greater Numbers than Villanies*, pag. 223. Brave Doctrines for a *Tory* Church of *England* Man to Preach *impuné*.

Sure this *Anonimus Eccleſiaſtical Polititian* would make a brave *Mufty*, or *Inquiſitor General*, or a *Compito*, with a Dog-whip in his Hand, which would affright worſe than the *Inquiſition*, and make many much honeſter Men than himſelf know ſorrow in abundance.

Theſe and many more Poſitions of the ſame complexion are the *Farci* of that Peſtilent Book, which well becomes a thorough-paced Church of *England* Prieſt: ſuch Poſitions and Doctrines brings contempt on ſuch of the Clergy, as being a *reproach to any Church*, and which the Church of *England* doth not Teach, and which are

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ſo vile, that they much more deſerve Fire and Faggot than thoſe burnt in *Oxford*, *July* 1683. but inſtead thereof he was made a Biſhop. Whether tends all this treacherous dealings with the People of God? Whilſt, like the Miniſters of *Jeroboam*, *ye lay ſuch Snares in Miſpah, and ſpread ſuch Nets upon Tabor*, teaching and perſwading Kings to uſe Laws, Menaces, and Subtilties, to force and confine the *People to Regal and State Religion*, be it true or falſe? or, at leaſt to force them to diſſemble, or to walk in a neutrality, or indifferency *between God and Baal*; or elſe to make the Souls of Men and God's Glory *ſubordinate to the Luſts and Riſings of Kings and Prieſts*, who *Balaam*-like for the hope of Honour or Preferments, or like *Micha's Levite* for a little better reward, crouch and cringe, and become more ſenſleſs of God's Glory, Wrath, and Indignation, and the eternal Welfare of the pretious Souls of God's own People than was *Balaam*'s dumb Aſs.

The fatal miſchief of ſuch baſe Flattery, and of ſuch Pulpit Laws and Doctrines, as it was foreſeen, puniſhed, and declared to tend to the ruine of this or any other Nation, by the Wiſdom of our Sage Predeceſſors; ſo we did ſee it was fairly fulfilling in our late Days and times. Such was the Imprudence, nay Impudence of the then Court Clergy, favourites and ſycophants in thoſe Days, that tho' *Sibthorp* and *Mainwaring* were by King and Parliament ſo ſeverely doomed to be puniſhed, yet no ſooner was the Parliament up, but by the Intereſt of thoſe fawning time-ſervers, the ſaid *Mainwaring* and *Sibthorp* were preferred, and Archbiſhop *Abbot* frowned upon, becauſe he would not Licenſe ſuch pulpit deſtructive Doctrines. And it is ſuch only of the Clergy, and other lewd Prieſts, that are in contempt and vile eſteem with the Nation, whilſt others, true Church of *England* Men indeed, are as highly in their Eſteem and Veneration. Thus to diſcover Crimes of ſome Prieſts is not to Calumniate the Church of *England*, but that ſhe may be purged of ſuch Vermin.

The Reverend Dean of *Rippon* in his Sermon on 1 *Kings* 8. 66. is of like Mind and Principles, who therein declares, *That be the Kings Heart inclinable to any Religion or none, yet it leaves him no Rival, none to contradict him; for he is made our King by God's Law, of which the Law of the Land is only declarative. Kings muſt not be upbraided with their Promiſes; which Promiſes are Donatives, and it is reaſon the Donor ſhould have the explaining of his own Mind: that the King is* major univerſis, *as well as* ſingulis; *that the ſole Legiſlative Power is lodged in the King, and to him belongs the Interpretation of all Laws, and Diſpenſing with them: and, that he may make a grant with a* non obſtante *to them*, &c. Pure Doctrine for a Reverend Dean to Preach, and yet this pure Pungril Church of *England* Man preferred to be Biſhop of *Cheſter* for theſe abominable Doctrines.

Whoever will ſeriouſly conſider and compare thoſe diſmal Preachments and Prints, deſtructive to all human Societies, which our high Church of *England* Men pulpitted and printed heretofore, and how highly they were diſguſted by ſeveral Parliaments, (the greateſt Wiſdom of our Nation,) and diſſatisfied therewith, and how they ſtigmatized thoſe very Doctrines, and condemning the Authors of them to mulcts and puniſhments, and yet when thoſe Parliaments were up, thoſe very falſe Teachers were carreſſed with Pardons and Preferments; whoever I ſay will compare thoſe Doctrines with thoſe Mr. *Samuel Johnſon* printed and maintained, even to the undergoing of *Inquiſition Torments*, and which the preſent Parliament and generality of the Nation now own, juſtifie, and practiſe with their Lives and Fortunes, muſt confeſs that both the Reward and Puniſhment of the one and the other were mightily miſplaced.

It is yet freſh in our own Memories when our Clergy were much more modeſt, when but one Temporizing *Sibthorp*, and another Court-Paraſite *Mainwaring* durſt Pulpit or Print ſuch Doctrines under the Sacred Title of *Apoſtolick Obedience*, Licens'd by the then Biſhop of *London*, and for which they received the juſt Cenſures of the King and the whole Kingdom in Parliament; which in the trueſt ſenſe, is the Church, or rather the Repreſentative Governing part both of Church and State, the Biſhops and Prieſts being but Officers thereof; (which they do not love to hear of,) but now Confidence, nay the Brow of Braſs, is the Temper and Complexion of very many Pulpits, which Thunder every where with ſuch Documents and Outcries, as the High-ways to Preferments, always having their Mouths half-cockt to let fly at all their gain-layers, not only in the Pulpits and Prints, but alſo in all publick places and Meetings, as Coffee-Houſes, *Weſtminſter-Hall*, *Court of Requeſt*, *Lobbies* in Parliament-time can witneſs; whereby they have obtained a new name of

Tory

Tory Church of *England* Men. They ſcorn to conſider the black Characters they were then ſtigmatized and branded with by former Parliaments, as *ſerpens qui devorat ſerpentem ſit Draco*, that they tended to the alteration and ſubverſion of the whole Frame and Fabrick of the State and Common-wealth: 'That they tended to the 'ſeducing of the Conſcience of the King, to increaſe his Royal diſpleaſure againſt 'his Subjects, to ſcandalize, impeach, and ſubvert the good Laws and Government of 'the Kingdom, and Authority of Parliaments; to avert his Majeſty's Mind from cal-'ling of Parliaments, to alienate his Royal Heart from his People, to cauſe Jealou-'ſies, Sedition, and Diviſions in the Kingdom, *&c.* Beſides theſe Characters, they 'held it a great preſumption for a private Divine to debate the Right and Power 'of the King; which is a matter of ſuch a nature as to be handled onely in Parlia-'ment, and that with moderation: and therefore the ſaid two Sermons, called *Re-'ligion and Allegiance*, were adjudged to be called in, and burnt by the King's Pro-'clamation; the Author to make his ſubmiſſion and acknowledgment of his Crime, 'to be impriſoned during the pleaſure of the Houſe, to be fined 1000 *l.* ſuſpend-'ed for three Years from the Exerciſe of the Miniſtery, diſabled to have any 'Eccleſiaſtical Dignity, or Secular Office, and for ever diſabled to Preach at Court. A better Example to imitate and follow, than either Fire and Faggot, or the Addreſs of the Univerſities, or the Pulpit Doctrines of the 9th of *September* 1683, wherein both King, Nobles, Prelates, and People were intereſſed in that Judgment. Were ſuch Tenets of ſuch ill conſequence by the Judgment of the whole Nation in thoſe Days, and are they not the ſame now? where's the difference? The violation offered to plain Texts of Scripture, by perverting the true and natural ſenſe and meaning of them, by ſuch of the Clergy, (a Generation of Men that under the umbrage of that Sacred Canopy of Religion, as being appointed Teachers and Miniſters of the Goſpel, indued with the Power of Ordination, ſet up for themſelves in an oppoſite and diſtinct Intereſt, ſeparated from the reſt, or Body of the Church, whereby they erect *regnum in regno* againſt the Purity and Sincerity of Religion and Intereſt of Mankind: and this they have been upon the catch to compaſs by little and little almoſt ever ſince the Apoſtles Days, and that by ſiniſter means) hath been the occaſion of all Miſgovernments, by *aſcribing Divine Power to Kings*, and that they are *accountable to none but God for any male-regiment.*

Falſe Prophets! not conſidering *if Rulers hearken to Lyes*; (and ſuch are all falſe gloſſers on Texts of Scripture,) *all his ſervants will be wicked*, Prov. 9. 12. ſuch-like of the Clergy are the Time-ſervers and Court-Paraſites, that draw *odium and contempt* upon that Sacred Profeſſion that ought to be had in Reverence by all the Sons and Daughters of Men. I could wiſh that they would *firſt pull out the Beams that are in their own Eyes*, before they go about *to remove the Motes that are in their Brothers Eyes.* Should I rake (as ſome naked Truths have done) into the Boſome of their Regiment of their Church Diſcipline, I doubt it would be found ſo foul as not to be ſwept, cleanſed, and purified, but by the *Beeſom of deſtruction*, by reducing it to what it was in the *Apoſtles days, and pureſt times*, which might eaſily be done if Prieſts were more Heavenly than Earthly minded, and would firſt ſeek the *Kingdom of Heaven*; under which eaſie Government the Goſpel flouriſhed, (tho' all Nations and Kingdoms were accurſed Enemies thereunto,) and would flouriſh now again with greater Purity than now it doth, did not our *Tory* Eccleſiaſticks diſdain, and think it too mean and below them to live the *life of the Apoſtles, and as Chriſt himſelf did*; *who, tho' being in the Form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and to Miniſter, and not be adminiſtred unto.* Remember the Reprimand and Counſels that Chriſt himſelf gave to *James* and *John, who ſought high things*; *but it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoever will be great among you, let him be the Miniſter*, Math. 20. Mark 10. Luke 22.

However let us conſider what Government Chriſt left to his Church, and trace that as far as we can, that we may ſee how well it hath been obſerved, or how far degenerated.

The Church, the Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is the moſt glorious State in the World, formed in the Council of God before the Creation of the Heavens, founded on the Croſs of his Son *in the fulneſs of time*, governed by his Eternal Self, quickned by his Spirit, the moſt valued of all his Jewels, the laſt End of all his Works, and the onely Scope of all his Marvels; a State not mortal, but en-

dureth for ever, *against which the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail*: It is the Houſe of Almighty God, the Temple of his Holineſs, the Pillar of his Truth, the Dwelling-place of his Grace and Glory. This *Church, this Kingdom, tho' it is not of this World*, yet it is firſt choſen, gathered, erected and eſtabliſhed in this World, not by the Wiſdom of the mighty Potentates of this World, *viz.* Kings, Emperors, and Armies, but by the Preaching of the Goſpel, by *Fiſhermen*, and other *illiterate and mean Perſons, and would have its Adminiſtrations without Temporal or Secular mixtures of human Power or Policy*, as ſo much as of inticing words, leſt his People ſhould thereby be beguiled, *Col.* 2. 4. but choſe rather by *the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to propagate his Goſpel, and to confound the wiſe and the mighty things of the World.* So *Paul*, 1 Cor. 2. *my ſpeech, and my preaching was not with inticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power*, v. 4. *That your Faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of Men, but in the power of God*, ver. 5. *However, we ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the Princes of the world*, ver. 6. *but we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſterie, even the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world, unto our glory*, verſe 7. *Which none of the Princes of the world knew*, &c.

The way and manner of propagating the Goſpel, and gathering of Churches from the beginning was after this ſort and manner, *viz.* Chriſt after his Aſcenſion having given them their Commiſſion, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. and having *filled all the Apoſtles with the Holy Ghoſt, according to his promiſe*, Acts 1. 8. and endued *them with tongues*; they departed, and ſeparated, and gathered ſeveral Congregations or Churches, ſo that the *ſound thereof went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World*, Rom. 10. 18. which was after this manner, *viz.* Chriſt after his Glorious Reſurrection, *having led Captivity Captive he gave gifts unto men*, and called ſome to be *his Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Teachers and Paſtors*, &c. who, after they *had choſen* Matthias *in the room of* Judas *the Traitor, and cloven Tongues like as Fire having ſate upon each of them, and all filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, and having preached the Goſpel at *Jeruſalem* and thereabouts, the Word of God and Number of Diſciples daily increaſing, from 120. to 3000. and more; for which they being perſecuted by the *Chief Prieſts* and *Sadduces, becauſe they taught the People, and preached through Jeſus the Reſurrection of the Dead*, (which ſeems to be the ſame Year that Chriſt was Crucified, *viz. An. Æt. ſuæ* 33. and 18. *Tiberius*) *ſcourging ſome, and killing others*: Which Perſecution occaſioned divers of the Brethren to withdraw themſelves into Neighbouring Places and Countries, which gave occaſion to the Goſpel to be more univerſally ſpread throughout *Paleſtine*, (the Apoſtles yet remaining in *Jeruſalem*,) *Acts* 8. who afterwards diſperſing themſelves, alſo ſpread the Goſpel into all Nations after this ſort and manner, *viz.* when a certain Number of Brethren, being Converted and well Inſtructed in the true Faith, agreed among themſelves to build or hire a Temple, Tabernacle, or Houſe, for their joint meetings and exerciſing their Religion, hired a Prieſt, and conſtituted a Church; and as the Number encreaſed, ſo that the Church and Prieſt being not ſufficient for them all, thoſe who were moſt remote did build another, and fit themſelves with more conveniences.

About the end of the Firſt Century, or beginning of the Second, *for good order and concord, and for civility and reſpect they did bear to their Biſhop or Prieſt, cuſtom began to include his conſent alſo*; which in proceſs of time ſoon degenerated into *Luciferian Uſurpation*, by the oblique Artifices of the Prieſts or Biſhops; of which *Rome* in proceſs of time taking hold, made great uſe to the *abuſing of the Power of the Brethren, and to incroach upon the Priviledges of the Body of the Church.*

It is not unworthy of our further obſervation, That all this while the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors were *Independent one of the other*, and ſo were their *ſeveral and ſelect gathered Congregations.* And tho' there were Thouſands of Churches gathered by the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, yet there are no foot ſteps remaining that the Churches gathered by any one Apoſtle, or Biſhop, or Presbyter, were ſubject or did depend on any one or more Churches, gathered by any other or more Apoſtles.

The like is as true, after the death of the Apoſtles, That no one Church by what Apoſtle ſoever gathered, was left ſubject to any other Church gathered by any other Apoſtle, no nor yet ſubject to any other Church of their own converting and gathering, but *every Church was to be governed by its own peculiar Body*, obſerving Goſpel Precepts, *viz. to love one another, to do all things decently and in order*, &c. Tho' the Pope hath uſurped a monſtrous Supremacy over all Churches, yet how, and when,

when, and by what Artifices and Tricks the Popes have uſurped and monopolized it to themſelves, Hiſtories are full and plain.

It is no leſs worthy of our obſervation, That the Dioceſſes or the Provinces of the Paſtors and Teachers, (whether Biſhops or Presbyters) of the ſeveral congregated Churches, did not extend *beyond one Church, one Altar, or one Pariſh*, i. e. ſuch a Number of Chriſtians as might all aſſemble and meet to Confer, Hear, and Communicate one with another for *mutual Edification*, ſo that every Biſhop or Presbyter might take Cognizance of every Man's Life and Converſation, and of the Spiritual ſtate of *every individual Soul*, of ſuch congregated Churches. And One hundred and fifty Souls were thought by St. *Chryſoſtom* and others, as many as one Paſtor could well, and more than he could without great labour, diſcharge. *v.* his *Homil. in Ignat.*

Paulinus, Biſhop of *Tyre* in *Conſtantine's* time, had but ſo many under his Epiſcopal charge, as the *Panegeriſt in Euſebius* informs us, as he could take a Perſonal notice of their Souls, and accurately examine the inward ſtate of every one, acquainting himſelf throughly with the condition of all thoſe Souls that were committed to him.

As Chriſt's Church and Kingdom excelleth and differeth from all the Kingdoms of the World, ſo doth its Government, (becauſe it was to be gathered and eſtabliſhed in all other Kingdoms, accurſed Enemies thereunto,) therefore Heavenly Wiſdom it ſelf appointed and ordained ſuch a Government for his Church, as it might exerciſe in any Nation by its own *Spiritual Laws* without the help of *human Mixtures, Superſtructions, or Politicks*, and without interfering with their Government or with their Laws, or prejudicing their Civil Rights. What alterations or additions have been made to this Government in any Nation, that Nation hath thereby as much as in them lies *reproached that Wiſdom which is from above, and pure*, and out of the proud conceits of their own Wiſdom and Politicks, and out of their own covetous and ambitious Projects, and out of the mean conceits of the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel have ſcorned to ſubſcribe and ſubmit to Gods own Appointment, not contenting themſelves to *be Servants and Miniſters of the Church, as Chriſt himſelf, and as the Apoſtles were*, but will be Maſters, Lords, Dukes, Marquiſſes, Earls, Princes, Judges, Cardinals, Pontiffs, what not? over their Flocks, and over all the Kingdoms of the World, whereby they demonſtrated their *own Wiſdom and Politicks to be Earthly, Senſual, Divelliſh.*

As if Chriſt (in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge,) did not know what Government was fitteſt and beſt for his Church and Kingdom, who choſe to eſtabliſh it not by high and mighty Powers, Princes, Potentates, and Pontiffs, but by mean and inconſiderate Perſons (Fiſhermen, Tent-makers, and the like) to magnifie the Power of his Grace, and thereby to confound the Wiſdom of the Worldly Wiſe. *But ſo it ſhall not be among you: but whoever ſhall be great among you, ſhall be your miniſter: And whoever ſhall be chiefeſt, ſhall be ſervant of all For even the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter*, Mark 10. 43, 44, 45.

To this Government Chriſt inſeparably and indiſpenſably annexed this great Prerogative and Priviledge, *viz. Liberty of Preaching and Propagating his Goſpel* to all Nations, when he ſaid, *Go teach all nations*, &c. and that beyond all contradiction of any Perſon or Power whatſoever, King, or Pontiff: with a command that Kings ſhould be their Nurſing Fathers.

What were they but the Chief Prieſts, Scribes, and Elders, that queſtioned Chriſt (*Prince of all the Kindoms of the earth*, Rev. 1. 5. *and to whom God had given the Heathen for his inheritance, and the utmoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion*, Pſal. 2. 8.) when he Taught in the Temple, and Preached the Goſpel, *by what Authority he did thoſe things? and who it was that gave him that authority?* Luke 20. 1, 2. And did not Chriſt diſdain to give them a ſatisfactory Anſwer, as Perſons medling with that they had nothing to do with all? And are not thoſe in our Days as ſawcy and inſolent as thoſe proud Prieſts of old were, who endeavour *to muzzle the Mouths of thoſe that ſhould tread out their Corn, and bring forth the food of Life unto the People*, and that for things only indifferent, no ways Eſſential to Salvation? And not only ſo, but Perſecuting them by Suſpenſions, depriving them of their Liberty, Maintenance, and Benefit, by Mulcts, Impriſonment, *&c.* Plagues little inferior to thoſe of the Helliſh Inquiſition, a Sin as National as Drinking, Drabbing, Swearing, or the like; and requires as National, Publick, and Solemn Humiliation for it as for thoſe other Crimes.

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In the Days of *Edward* the VI. and Queen *Elizabeth*, the Diſſenters of thoſe times inſiſted mainly, *That no Reformation of Church Diſcipline and Government could be perfect unleſs reduced to that ſtate it was in, in the Apoſtles Days.* This, the Wiſdom of thoſe times thought neither poſſible, nor certain, nor abſolutely convenient, becauſe what was uſed in thoſe Times the Scripture fully declareth not; ſo that making their Times the Rule and Canon of Church-Polity, is to make a Rule, which being not poſſible to be fully known, is as impoſſible to be fully obſerved. So Judicious *Hooker.* However let us trace thoſe Times as far as we can.

Without all peradventure, and beyond all contradiction, Chriſt knowing that his Meſſengers which he ſent to gather a People to himſelf out of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Heathens*, *Publicans*, and *Sinners*, by perſwaſive means only, were to build up his Church within the Boſoms of Kingdoms, (avowed and accurſed Enemies to his Goſpel,) he therefore gave them ſuch Doctrines, and ſuch Commiſſions, for Doctrine and Diſcipline, as they might any where Publiſh and Exerciſe in a quiet and peaceable manner; the Subjects of no Commonwealth or Kingdom being any where therein concerned in Goods, or Perſons by virtue of that Spiritual Regiment whereunto Chriſtian Religion once embraced did make them liable.

The Documents, Powers, and Directions, are recorded *ſparſim* in the Goſpel, but more particularly in the 18th of *Matth.* viz. *If thy Brother tranſgreſs againſt thee*, what then? *go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother*; *but if he will not hear thee*, what then? *then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed: and if he ſhall neglect to hear them*, what then? *tell it to the Church*, (*i. e.* to that whole congregated Church or Aſſembly, whereof thou and he are Members,) what then? *if he neglect to hear them, let him be to thee as an Heathen or Publican*, i. e. purſue him in the Courts of Civil Judicature, as thou wouldſt any other that is not a Chriſtian, *i. e.* as a *Publican* or *Heathen*, or any other wrong doer, not to own them as Brethren, nor to keep company with them, *with ſuch no not to eat with them*, as not being worthy the Name and Profeſſion of Chriſtians which they had put on, they not living to the *adorning* but to the *ſhame* of the *Goſpel.*

This is the Summ of the Diſcipline and Government that Chriſt left to his Church for ought appears by any plain Scripture. *And what need of more or other?* For if the Miniſters of the Everlaſting Goſpel have free liberty to Inſtruct, break Bread, exhibit the Sacraments, and Pray, the Civil Magiſtrate hath ſufficient Power by *God's own Ordinance* to order all the reſt. And their Commiſſion extends no farther, *viz. Go ye, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you*, Matth. 28. 19, 20.

Cura Animarum (Salvation and Damnation of Souls being of Everlaſting conſequence, and of the higheſt concern in the World to every individual,) is, beyond all peradventure and contradiction, *the main Duty and Glory both of Prieſt and Prelate, and to be apt to teach, to be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long ſuffering and doctrine*, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. for hereunto moſt eſpecially, and if not onely, they are called as was *Aaron*; and if not called unto this Duty, they are called unto none by any Patent or Commiſſion from Heaven.

This was the Government the Apoſtles uſed, and left no other; and the Goſpel proſpered under it then; and why it ſhould not proſper under it ſtill, no reaſon can be aſſcribed: however, let us trace the ſteps thereof, and ſee by what vile arts and means it became degenerated into meer *worldly Forms*, ſet up for meer worldly Ends and Intereſts.

In the Days of our Saviour, whilſt on Earth, there was *a common Purſe* which *Judas* carried, which was always filled and ſupplied with the free-will Offerings of pious devout Princes, and of private Perſons, who plentifully contributed their Temporal Riches to the Churches; which was firſt inſtituted, kept, and diſtributed for two *Ends only*, viz. *Firſt*, For the Neceſſities of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, Preachers of the Goſpel. *Secondly*, For Alms for the Poor, which was diſtributed (as the Lord commanded) by *Judas*, who was a Thief, and uſurped to himſelf the ſaid Goods, common to the Apoſtolical Colledge; and was ſo Covetous, that he ſold to the *Jews* the very Perſon of Chriſt.

When Chriſt was aſcended into Heaven, the Holy Apoſtles in the Church of *Jeruſalem* kept on foot the ſame Holy inſtitution, and for the ſelf-ſame Ends, *viz.* for the *Neceſſities of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and for Alms for the Poor*; the Faithful

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in thoſe Days making all their *Goods common*, ſold their Poſſeſſions for the ſame Purſe, or Stock, and Uſes. So that the Community of the Church was not diſtinct from the particular of each faithful Man. Yet this Cuſtom of having all things in common went not out of *Jeruſalem*. And in other Churches planted alſo by the Holy Apoſtles, this Cuſtom was not obſerved, neither did it laſt long in *Jeruſalem*.

Whereupon, 26 Years after Chriſt, it is read, That the publick was diſtinct from the private, every one knowing his own; but the Money being common in that Church, as in others founded in Oblations, which placed in common, ſerved onely for the Miniſters and for the Poor.

The firſt Day of the Week, (which for that cauſe was called *the Lord's-Day*) the Faithful met together, and each one offered that which he had ſet apart of the foregoing Week for the Neceſſities of the common; which was adminiſtred and diſtributed by the Apoſtles themſelves for a ſhort time after the *Aſcenſion*, whence aroſe murmurings, and diſcontents, and many diſſatisfactions, ſome thinking they were neglected, and had too little, and that others had too much, which gave great trouble and diſtractions to the Apoſtles; which they conſidering, *and finding that they could not attend this perfectly together with Preaching the Word of God*, they reſolved to ſtick cloſe to the Miniſtery of Preaching, and Teaching, and Praying continually, and therefore appointed for this Office (of having *care of Temporal things*) another) ſort of Miniſters, (*Deacons*) quite different from that we ſee done in theſe Days; wherein the Pope and Chief Prelates of the Church attend the Government of Temporal things, and the Office of Preaching and Teaching, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel neglected, and left unto *Friars* or *Brethren*, and *inferior Prieſts* in the Church. Wherefore they directed the Brethren to look out among themſelves, from the body of the Faithful, Seven Men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and Wiſdom, whom they appointed for that Miniſtery, that they might give themſelves *continually to Prayer*, and to the Miniſtery of the Word: And whereſoever they founded a Church, they alſo appointed Deacons in the ſame manner, and to the ſame Miniſtery.

As alſo they ordained Biſhops and Prieſts and other Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters (Faſting and Praying preceeding.) And the common *Election of the Faithful* following after; obſerving inviolably this order, never deputing any Man to any Eccleſiaſtical Charge, who was not *firſt Elected by the Univerſality of the Church*; which is of all the Faithful together.

This Cuſtom was obſerved not only during the life-times of the Apoſtles, but even about two hundred Years, maintaining the Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters, and the Poor alſo with the publick Stock raiſed by ſuch Oblations. And the fervent Zeal and Charity of thoſe Times was ſo great, that the Oblations amounted to very great Summs.

In the Church of *Rome*, that rich City *Marcion*, about the Year 170, gave a free-will Offering at one time of Five thouſand Crowns of Gold in the Church of *Rome*; who afterward holding Erroneous Opinions in matters of Faith, he was expelled from the Congregation, and all his Money reſtored to him.

This rich City grew ſo rich by thoſe Oblations, that after Two hundred and twenty Years the *Roman* Emperours coveted them. Whereupon *Decius* the Prince arreſted St. *Lawrence*, a *Roman* Deacon, to take the Eccleſiaſtical Treaſures from him; but, he being aware thereof, diſtributed them all ſuddenly, and ſo diſappointed the Tyrant.

The Church thus abounding in Riches, the Clergy began then to degenerate and to live at eaſe, not being content with the daily Food of the Church, but would have their ſeparate ſhares every Day, or Month, or longer, and live where they pleaſed; which, tho' it declined from the Primitive Perfection, was yet winked at by the Fathers: but it reſted not here, for the Biſhops began to fail the Poor of their due, and kept more for themſelves; and ſo growing Rich with the Goods of the Church, dealt alſo in Uſury to increaſe in Riches; and withall leaving off the Care of Teaching the Doctrines of Chriſt, and buſied themſelves in getting Pelf: of which St. *Cyprian* complains in his time.

Tho' the Church poſſeſſed ſo much Wealth, yet it had no ſettled or ſtable Goods at the firſt. Yet in *France*, and in *Italy*, ſome left or gave ſtable Goods to Churches, which in the Year 302 were all confiſcated by *Diocleſian* and *Maximinian*; tho' in *France* the Emperors Decrees were not executed, by the bounty of *Conſtance*

Cloro Cæſar, who governed it. But a while after *Conſtantine* and *Licinius* granted freedom of Religion to the Chriſtians, approved of the *Eccleſiaſtical Colledges* called *Churches*, granted generally throughout the Empire, that they might gain and acquire ſtable Goods as well by Gift as Teſtament, exempting alſo the Clergy from perſonal publick ſervices, that they might attend the Duties of Religion more conſtantly.

But the Clergy made ſo ill uſe of theſe Favours, that Princes were forced to regulate them by Laws, in the Year 370: Which St. *Jerom* confeſſeth to have been a Remedy againſt the Corruptions entred amongſt the Clergy, which was of getting Temporal Eſtates.

But that Law not being ſufficient to ſuppreſs their greedineſs of getting Temporal Eſtates, another Law was made *Anno* 390 to the ſame end and purpoſe: this exceſs of getting was ſo unpleaſant to St. *Auſtin*, who lived in thoſe Days, that he openly declared againſt them, ſaying, *The Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtry conſiſted not in getting and diſtributing much, but in getting and diſtributing well.* Likewiſe he abhorred the new indirect ways they had found out of increaſing their Stock, and would never permit them in his Church; and often declared in his Sermons, That he had rather live on the Primitive Oblation, than to have a care of Poſſeſſions, which hindred from attending intirely upon the Principal Charge of a Biſhop, *i. e.* Spiritual things.

Notwithſtanding all Laws, Reprimands, and Checks, yet the Eccleſiaſtical Goods increaſed exceſſively above what it ought; but the ancient manner of Governing and Diſtributing laſted till the Year 420. both the Oblation and the Eccleſiaſtical incoms from real Eſtates were in common, and governed by Deacons, Sub-Deacons, and by other Aſſiſtants, and diſtributed for the maintenance of Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters, and of the Poor. The Colledge of Prieſts, and the Biſhops, were the Superintendants; ſo that the Biſhops diſpoſed of every thing, and the Deacons executed it.

But after *France*, *Spain*, and *Africa*, were divided from the Empire, the Churches were differently governed. The *Eaſtern* Church retained the common Government, but in the *Weſtern* the Biſhops by Adminiſtrators and Superintendants made themſelves Maſters, and to govern the Goods of the Church Arbitrarily; from whence aroſe Confuſions in the diſtribution of them, and the Buildings fell to ruine, and the Poor neglected and forſaken. For which cauſe, about the Year 470 in the *Weſtern* Church, it was ordained, that the Eccleſiaſtical Goods ſhould be divided into Four parts; which alteration was alſo ſoon abuſed. And alſo other changes made in the Government, which in and through all things proved contrary to the Ancient; as alſo the manner of chuſing Miniſters was inſtituted by the Apoſtles, *That Biſhops, Prieſts, and other Miniſters of God's Word, and the Deacons, Miniſters of Temporal things ſhould be elected by the Univerſality of the Faithful*, and ſhould be ordained by the Biſhops, with laying of Hands on the Head; a thing which laſts without alteration to this Day. Which Cuſtom continued about 200 Years. *The Biſhops were choſen by the People*, and ordained by the *Metropolitan* in the preſence of all the Com-provincial Biſhops, or elſe by their Conſents, *&c.* And afterwards many Provinces, for a better Form of Government, were ſubject to one Primate, whoſe Conſent was alſo required for Ordaining. Then the Prieſts, Deacons, and other Clergy Men, were preſented by the People, and ordained by the Biſhop, or elſe nominated by the Biſhops, and with the Conſent of the People ordained by him. An unknown Man was never received, neither did the Biſhop ever Ordain one who was not approved of and commended; or rather, preſented by the People; and the Conſent of the People was judged ſo neceſſary, that Pope *Leo* the Firſt treated amply, that the Ordination of a Biſhop could not be valid, nor lawful, *which was not required by the People*, and by them approved of; *which was the Opinion of all the Saints of thoſe times.* A thing worthy to be noted now a Days, when that Election is declared to be illegitimate and null, where the People have any ſhare. Thus is ſeen how things in the Government of the Church are degenerated from what they were in purer times, even quite contrary, that now accounted lawful, which was then accounted wicked, and that now unjuſt which then was reputed holy.

The Clergy finding the ſweet and great Advantages of the Favours granted by Princes, did improve them to the uttermoſt, but by ſuch means as were not pleaſing to the Faithful, of which St. *Auſtin* and St. *Chriſoſtom* greatly complained in their times. For they increaſed the common Stock by undue practiſes, and diſtributed

buted over much to themſelves, and neglecting the Poor. And their Wealth ſo vaſtly and unjuſtly increaſing, they inſtituted new kinds of Government, which they changed at pleaſure, until at laſt it came to that we ſee at this Day.

Not content with the old ways of getting, about the 500 Year another ſort of Religious Colledges, called *Monaſteries*, were erected. Monkery began in *Egypt* about the Year 300, and from thence paſt into *Greece*, whereby St. *Baſil* at the Year 370, it was formed in the manner which yet continues. But in *Italy* about the Year 350, it was brought to *Rome* by *Athanaſius*, but had little encouragement till about the Year 500, when St. *Equitius* and St. *Benedict* gave it a ſettled Form. The Inſtitution of *Equitius* increaſed but little, but that of *Benedict* ſpread it ſelf all over *Italy*, and beyond the Mountains. The Monks in thoſe Days were not Eccleſiaſticks but Seculars; and in the Monaſteries without the Cities *they lived on their own Labour, Arts, and Husbandry*, together with ſome addition out of the publick Oblations, and were governed by the Abbot.

The Abbot *Tritemius* makes Account that Monaſteries of the Benedictine Monks were 15000, beſides Prepoſitures and leſſer Convents. The Monks themſelves choſe their own Abbots; by this time the Biſhops by tricks and cunning Artifices became abſolute Diſpenſators of the Fourth part of the Churches Goods, which made the haughty Clergy mind Temporal Goods more than Spiritual, and to make themſelves Eminent and Popular; whence aroſe Diſcords, Seditions, Tumults, and Blows, to the great Diſturbance of Civil States, eſpecially about the Election of Clergy Dignitaries, which Primarily at the firſt Inſtitution *was in the People, beyond contradiction*; but afterwards by the *cunning craftineſs of thoſe that lay in wait to deceive*, it was ſometimes in the Clergy, ſometimes in the Prince, ſometimes in a mixture, one chuſing and another confirming, as the Intereſt and Power of the one or the other could prevail: Elections being then uſed not as the *end of Divine Service, but for ſecular Intereſts, and worldly Ends.*

Antiquity knew of no diſtinction between *Ordination* and *Benefice*, and Ordaining was then the ſame thing as to give an Office, and the right of having ones livelihood from the common Goods of the Church. But afterward through Wars and Confuſions, the Clergy being driven from their Miniſtries, had recourſe and retired to other Churches, where they were received as their own Clergy, and ſometimes when ſome Miniſter of their own died, a ſtranger, if eminently worthy, ſucceeded in his Miniſtry, and was then ſaid to be Incardinated, whereas he that was firſt exalted to an Office was ſaid to be Ordinated or Ordained, but he who was diſpoſeſſed of his own, and provided with another, was called Incardinated. This began in *Italy*. Hence in proceſs of time came Cardinals, *from Pariſh Prieſts, to be now equal to Kings*, and had their maintenance out of the common Stock accordingly: of which there were *Epiſcopi Cardinales, & Presbyteri Cardinales. Rome* and *Ravenna* being then the richeſt Churchs, received moſt of the eminent ſtrangers, and therefore they had moſt Cardinals, and they choſe the moſt eminent Men, ſtrangers, and were called Cardinals. In *Rome* the name remains to this Day; in *Ravenna* it laſted until 1543, and then was taken away by *Paul* the Third. It is wonderful to ſee how from ſuch a low beginning they have grown to ſuch an exceſſive height, even from that which had neither Degree nor Order in the Church, but brought in by chance, or rather by Clergy-craft and ſubtilty, is raiſed to be ſo Supreme in the Church as we ſee it now a days: *Æquiparantur Regibus* was the common ſaying of the Court. *Innocent* the Fourth, *Anno* 1244, gave them the *red Hat*; and *Paul* the Second gave them the *red Cap*, the Regulars excepted; which was alſo granted to them by *Gregory* the Fourteenth.

Tho' at firſt none were Ordained without a Title, which continued until a little before the Year 500, yet afterwards the Biſhops Ordained without a Title or any Office, and therefore without Benefice; which ſort of Clergy in progreſs of time grew ſo exceſſively numerous, that thence aroſe a Multitude of Indecencies, Irregularities, and Scandals, which did more eſpecially ariſe from the deſire of many to become Clergy-men for increaſe of their Livelihood, and to enjoy the Exemptions granted by Princes; the other from ambitious Prelates, deſiring to have a multitude of Subjects, whom they might command; which diſorder yet remains, and makes the People looſe their great Reſpect for Religion and their Charity. Before the Council of *Trent* ſuch Biſhops ſwarmed, but now much leſſened.

Tho'

Tho' ſo great Inconveniences and Irregularities aroſe by Ordaining without a Title, yet the *Jeſuits* will have it, that the *Pope* may Ordain without any Title, either true or feigned, whereby the Reverence to that Order hath abated, in reſpect to that it had when Eccleſiaſtical Orders *were only Ordained to Offices*; for which reaſon all them *reſided and dwelt upon their Charges, which could not be left vacant, there being none to ſupply them*, all being occupied in their own. Likewiſe the diſtinctions of Benefices *Compatibile & Incompatabile* (found out only to cheat the World) was then unknown, whether fatter or leaner, the Poſſeſſor was obliged to ſerve it perſonally without Unions, Reſerves, Commenda's, and Devices, found out only by Clergy Craft to avoid the old and beſt Canons, and to bring all into the Popes Power.

There were many Proviſions made by divers Princes to prevent the many Abuſes occaſioned by the Ambitious and Covetous Clergy but all in vain, Clergy-craft quickly found out Diſtinctions and Subtilties, and coined Evaſions to avoid both Canons and Laws made for Redreſs of ſuch and other Abuſes which were before the Year 800.

About which time *Charlemagn* having reduced under his Obedience *Italy*, *France*, and *Germany*, reformed in ſome meaſure the Abuſes in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, reducing them to an Uniformity; which in divers places have been variouſly uſed, renewing many of the old Canons and Councels *worn out of uſe by Clergy Craft*, and making of Eccleſiaſtical Laws for the diſtribution of Benefices as they ought, and partly *reſtored unto the Pariſhes the Poſſeſſions which the Biſhops had uſurped unto themſelves*, Ordaining that every Prieſt ſhould have a ſufficient Benefice, according to that ſaying, *Beneficium datur propter officium.* He reſtored alſo to the Monks that Power of chuſing their own Abbot. He Eſtabliſhed alſo, *That the Biſhops ought to Ordain thoſe Prieſts who were preſented by the People of the Pariſhes.* He Eſtabliſhed alſo the Pope of *Rome* in like manner as he had been inſtituted when the Emperors of the *Eaſt* had the Dominion over *Rome*, viz. *That the Pope ſhould be Elected by the Clergy and the People*, and the Decree of the Election ſhould be ſent to the Emperour; upon whoſe Approbation the elected was conſecrated: but to the Honour of the Clergy be it remembred, *there was never any Law made to remedy any of their Abuſes, but they ſoon found out a way to evade them.*

About this time the Cuſtom of giving Tythes unto Pariſh-Churches paſſed out of *France* over into *Italy*, which ſoon were abuſed as well as other Proviſions made by the free-will Offerings of the Faithful, and ſo are to this Day. But what ſhould I ſay more of their Abuſes in other things, (as of Abbies and Abbots, Monkery and Monaſteries, Annates, univerſally reputed grievous and condemned, yet juſtified by ſome, their Arms Spiritual, Expectancies, or Reverſions, Benefices, Pluralities, Comenda's, Unions, Reſervations, Cardinals, Coajutorſhip, Decretals, Donations, Election of Popes, Prieſts, Biſhops, and Deacons, Exemptions, Mendicants, Regreſſes, Indulgences, Quindeniums, Inveſtitures, Reſerves, Penſions, plenitude of Power, *Non-obſtante's*, Devolution, Canons, Dominion of Goods Eccleſiaſtical, Reſignations, Renuntiations, Alienations, Reſervations, Symony, Vacancies, Titles of Dukes, Marquiſſes, and Earls given to Biſhops, *&c.*) but that the Clergy in thoſe times did abuſe that Power they had in the Goſpel, endeavouring rather to acquire Empire, Grandeur, and Temporal Eſtates, by any indirect means, than with *Paul* to *have made the Goſpel of Chriſt without charges, by preaching the Goſpel willingly:* A woe always attending the neglect thereof, *though they which miniſter about holy things, ought to live of the things of the Temple: and that they which wait at the Altar, ought to be partakers of the Altar*, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 16, 17, 18.

It is an Obſervation of godly Men, That in thoſe times *the Court would never be induced, that a gainful Abuſe ſhould be aboliſhed or corrected, until it had prepared a greater and more profitable one.*

So great Authority tends to no good, becauſe it appears thereby that almoſt all the Abuſes have been introduced. From hence proceeded the Commendums, Penſions, Regreſſes, Unions, Reſignations, Expectancies, Reſervations, yearly Payments, Quindeniums, and other kinds which no Man defends.

The *Government of the Church was firſt Democratical*, all the Faithful being preſent in the chiefeſt Councels and Deliberations: Thus we ſee that all were preſent at the Election of *Matthias* unto the Apoſtleſhip, and in the Election of the Six Deacons, and when St. *Peter* received *Cornelius*, a Heathen *Centurion*, unto the Faith, he gave an account of it to all the Church. Likewiſe in the Councel celebrated in

Jeruſalem

Jeruſalem the Apoſtles, the Prieſts and the *Faithful Brethren were preſent*, and the Letters were written in the name of all the Three Orders. When *Paul* writ his Advice about the *inceſtuous Perſon*, he directed his Epiſtle unto *the Church of God which is at Corinth*; *to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours.*

They *perverted the Spiritual Arms of Excommunication*, (which was uſed only for the Correction of Sinners,) into the defence of their Temporal Poſſeſſions. The Law of Tithes is indeed *Moſaically Divine*, but not a Law *naturally Divine, nor Chriſtian*; and it obliged only that People at that time, now it obligeth none. In the many Troubles and Uproars, occaſioned by the Biſhops confederating with the Popes againſt the Emperor, the Biſhops obtained the Publick Incomes, and the Regal Rights or Duties; and when the Differences were compoſed, they had taken ſo firm Poſſeſſion, that the Princes were neceſſitated to grant them *in feudo* that which *de facto* they had uſurped to themſelves; by which they acquired alſo the Titles of Dukes, and Marquiſſes, and Earls. Many of them are ſtill in *Germany*, remaining ſuch both in Name and Fact; but in *Italy* in Name only.

The Canoniſts ſay, That the Poor are obliged to pay Tithes, for that which is given them by Alms in Begging at Doors: and the Harlots are bound to pay Tithes of their gain by Whoredom. The greateſt and moſt frequent Legacies and Gifts are from Harlots.

Prohibitions for Alienating, which were made againſt Clergy-men in favour of the Laiety, are turned about againſt the Laiety in favour of the Clergy.

The Popes never failed to get any Abuſe whatever to be juſtified by Doctrines. Tho' the Popes ought to feed and not ſhare the Sheep, yet they make themſelves *fat with the chiefeſt of all the offerings of Gods holy Church and People*, 1 Sam. 2. 29.

Having thus briefly declared the Government of the Church in general, which is more at large ſet forth by *Padre Paolo*, that incomparable Servite, in his Treatiſe of *Beneficiary matters*, let us conſider how the Government of the Church of *England* now ſtands.

In brief thus: *Firſt*, In the *Britiſh* times, before the Converſion of the *Saxons*, the particular modes of Adminiſtration, as all things elſe concerning the *Britiſh* Church, are very obſcure. But this is clear enough, *That the Popes Tyranny and Uſurpation being then unborn*, and Princes enjoying their whole Power both in *Eccleſiaſticks and Civils*, nothing was ordained without their Authority and Permiſſion, who yet gave large Powers to their Clergy, both for *Debating and Judging in their own Conſiſtories*, things proper to their Care and Inſpection, as at large appeareth in the Imperial Conſtitutions of *Theodoſius*, *Juſtinian*, and others.

Secondly, The *Engliſh Saxons* Church, being planted by *Auguſtine* the Monk, through the care and direction of *Gregory the Great*, did bear a reſpect to the *Roman* See, but owned none of its Authority and Dominion in Eccleſiaſtical matters. The Biſhops and others of the Clergy aſſembled often, and made *Eccleſiaſtical Laws and Conſtitutions*, but not without the Licenſe and Allowance of the Kings, who by their own Authority, (indeed by Eccleſiaſtical Uſurpation and Tyranny) enacted alſo many things of Religious and Eccleſiaſtical Practiſe; as appeareth largely in the *Saxon* Laws collected by *Lambert* and others, and Sir *Henry Spillman*'s Councels.

Thirdly, For about 1000 Years after Chriſt, the *Engliſh* Church refuſed thus the *Roman* Yoke, till that proud Prieſt *Thomas Becket*, Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* firſt was ſo bold as to ſhake off the King's Rule and Authority in matters Eccleſiaſtical, denying him Obedience without the Condition of *Salvo Ordine ſuo*, and ſo as much as in him lay deſtroyed the Liberty of the *Engliſh* Church and the King's Prerogative: This appeareth from *Anſelm*'s 36 *Epiſt. to Paſchalis*, *Matthew Paris*, and others. *Peter Pence* indeed were formerly paid out of reſpect to the Biſhops of *Rome*; but the Pope never obtained the *Inveſtiture of Biſhops*, and the right of receiving Appeals, and conſequently that Soveraignty and Headſhip over the Church, till ſuch time as *Becket* being killed, *Henry* the Second, to get Abſolution, ſubjected himſelf and his Kingdom to the *Roman* Juriſdiction about *An.* 1172.

Fourthly, This Foreign Authority was after 200 Years reſtrained by the Statute of *Præmunire*, and other Acts of Parliament; yet the Pope ſtill kept his Foot here (tho' not his Body,) or rather his Hand, which ſcraped up a World of Treaſure. The Canon Law was the Law of the Church; Archbiſhops without the King's

leave aſſembled their Provincial Synods; the Decrees of which bound all Men by no other Authority than that meerly Eccleſiaſtical, and provided that they were not contrary to the *Jus commune* (as it is called of the Pope, rather than that) of the King. Great were the Priviledges and Exemptions of the Clergy from Secular Courts and Juriſdictions, as is to be ſeen in *Articuli Cleri*, and other old Laws, and the Hiſtory of thoſe times abundantly teſtifie.

Fifthly, This Exorbitant and Foreign Power was in part baniſhed by Act of Parliament in *Henry* VIII his time. Now its provided that the King ſhould be ordained Supreme Head, or Chief, and Supreme in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, as the *Jewiſh* Kings of old and the Ancient Chriſtian Princes were; and it is made High Treaſon to deny it. Now conſideration being had of the old *Canon Law*, it was conſidered how to reform and reduce it to ſuch a temper as would ſute with this new Alteration; and it was then thought fit that it ſhould rather be quite Aboliſhed, and a new intire Body collected for the Government of the Church.

Sixthly, To this purpoſe it was Enacted, that Thirty or more Perſons ſhould be deputed by the King to make this Collection. *But it being better to live where nothing, than where every thing is lawful*, they were not ſo raſh to run down Root and Branch, and take away the old Building before a new one was modelled; and therefore till this Model ſhould be prepared and confirmed in Parliament, it was Enacted, *That the Canon or Eccleſiaſtical Laws ſhould ſtand in the ſame force as formerly they did at that time, except in ſuch Caſes wherein they thwarted the Laws of the Land.*

Seventhly, This *new body of Eccleſiaſtical Laws* was by *Edward* the Sixth attempted, and an Eſſay made by Dr. *Haddon*, ſince printed by the name of *Reformatio Legum Eccleſiaſticarum*; but never was perfected nor confirmed by Act of Parliament, and therefore the Canon Law is ſtill in force as formerly, but where it contradicts the Law of the Land.

Thus is the Crown with much ado pluckt out of the Paws of the Eccleſiaſtical Man of Sin, and reſtored in Parliament to its Ancient Rights in matters Eccleſiaſtical; It being by Act of Parliament Eſtabliſhed, *That the Clergy ſhould not aſſemble without the King's Licenſe and Authority.* By all which it appears, That the Kingdom, the Church of *England*, now hath a Supreme *Independent Right and Power* within it ſelf, to make Coerceive Laws for the Welfare of it ſelf, without running to *Rome* or to any Foreign State or Power.

Upon this *Popiſh* Foundation (which hath not the leaſt ground in Scripture) ſtands our Darling Eccleſiaſtical or Church-Diſcipline and Regiment, (a meer *Popiſh* Relick and Hierarchy, ſet up only not to miniſter unto, but to domineer, contrary to Chriſt's Precepts and Examples.) And our Eccleſiaſticks have not as yet made it their concern or buſineſs to endeavour a farther Reformation thereof, (tho' deſigned even from the beginning of the Reformation in *Henry* the Eighth's Days,) but are very well pleaſed to eat the Fat and drink the Sweet thereof: And tho' they know that their Incroachments and Uſurpations have been all got by *Popiſh* Prieſt-craft, and by which they have for above 1000 Years cajoled and fooled both Crowns and People out of their juſt Rights, and ſubjected *Cæſars* and great Princes and Principalities to their own Empire; And inſtead of a pure Goſpel Government have Eſtabliſhed to themſelves a mighty Throne of Iniquity and Abominations, fitted for Pride, Domination, Self-ends, and Intereſt, *&c.* Which Prieſt-craft, togegether with Antichriſt, began to work in the Days of the Apoſtles, even from *Judas*'s Purſe, and continues to this very Day; which is demonſtrably made out, as by many Hiſtories, ſo more punctually and particularly by *Father* Paul *his Treatiſe of Beneficiary matters*, ſhewing how, and when, and by what Prieſt-craft all their Acquiſitions, (Friars Annals, Arms Spiritual, Benefices, Unions and Vacancies of Benefices, Canons, Cardinals, Coajutors, Commendam's, Election of Biſhops and Prieſts, Exemptions, Goods Eccleſiaſtical, Appeals, Monks, Monaſteries, Indulgencies, Inveſtitures, Pluralities, Non-reſidence, Excommunication, Epiſcopal Audience, Abſolutions, Diſpenſations, Prebends, *&c.*) were acquired, uſed, and abuſed. A foul Miſtake and Crime, to think to Eſtabliſh the Church with good Government, taken from human Reaſon, as if it were a Temporal State.

The Church and Kingdom of Chriſt, as it is more Excellent than any other Kingdom in the World, (*the Scepter of Righteouſneſs being the Scepter of his Kingdom*, and to which Kingdom all other Kings and Princes ought to bow down and

and be ſubſervient,) ſo it and the Government thereof differs from all other Governments and Kingdoms. *Firſt*, It hath but one Head, and that not by Election or Succeſſion, but by everlaſting Continuation. *Secondly*, This Head choſe his Church or Kingdom, and not the Church him, *John* 15.16. *Luke* 32. 23. *Thirdly*, The Laws of this Kingdom are more excellent and more unchangeable than the Laws of any other Commonwealth or Kingdom, as being the Dictates and Precepts of Chriſt, the onely and Eternal Head, and are the unchangeable Copies and Expreſſions of his Immutable and moſt Holy Will. *Fourthly*, The Obligements and Conformity of every Member thereof unto theſe Laws are far more ſtrickt and ſevere than in any other Commonwealth or Kingdom, *viz.* That every one ſhould love his Lord and King above all, and his Neighbour and fellow Citizens as himſelf, ſhould abſtain from all appearance of Evil, and reſiſt unto Blood, ſtriving againſt Sin, *&c.* *Fifthly*, In the viſible Government of his Church and Kingdom, he hath appointed a *Prieſthood by irrevocable Ordination*, (in which it is diſſimular to all Temporal Governments,) as Officers of his Church and Kingdom to continue after his Aſcenſion, *viz.* Prieſts and Biſhops; and ſoon after his Aſcenſion the Apoſtles added Deacons alſo by Ordination. What Powers Chriſt gave them, what Duties he obliged them unto, are viſible by their Commiſſion written in great and indelible Characters; *viz. Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and ſo, I am with you to the end of the world*, Matth. 28. 19, 20. and they were to *Preach not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and themſelves the ſervants of his Church for Jeſus ſake*, 2 Cor. 4. 5.

This is the Summ of their Commiſſion and Authorities that Chriſt left them; Chriſt well knowing that his Apoſtles, and Miniſters, and their Succeſſors, were to gather him a Church from among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, all bitter Enemies to him and his Goſpel, and to Eſtabliſh it in the Boſom of their Kingdoms, did preſcribe them ſuch a Government and Laws as they might any where execute peaceably, without prejudice to the Subjects of any Commonwealth or Kingdom, either in their Lives or Fortunes, no other Subjects being ſubject unto that Spiritual Regiment but onely ſuch as embraced the *Chriſtian Religion*. In this *Chriſtian Church* Chriſt ordained Officers to Teach, Baptize, Ordain, and Adminiſter his Sacraments: but for what concerned Honeſty and Diſhoneſty, doing Good, and working Wickedneſs, and breaking the Laws of Morality, Chriſt gave many general Rules and Precepts to the *whole Church*, (who were to Govern its own Body and the Officers thereof, and not the Officers the Church or Body,) *viz. to love one another, even our Neighbours as our ſelves*, &c. And if any did trangreſs the Laws, not peculiar to them as Men, but as Chriſtians, if the *Offence were private*, then they were *privately to be admoniſhed*; If publick, then they that tranſgreſſed openly were to be *rebuked openly*; but if after Friendly Admonitions and Reprimands, private and publick, they ſtill continued incorrigible, then *not to own them as Brethren, nor keep company with them, with ſuch, no not to eat*: and in fine purſue and proſecute them as *Publicans and Heathens*, i. e. Sue them in the Civil Courts: And this is the *Summ of the whole Government and Diſcipline which Chriſt left to his Church*; and any other there is not extant in Scripture: nor is there need of any more or other, as is hinted before.

Let the Pope, Prelate, or Presbyter, demonſtrate any other Form of Church Government, if they can. They know they cannot: but they will pelt us with Stories of another Government, and of its Antiquity, and general Uſe thereof for many Ages. Be it ſo, let them derive it as high as they can, from that very Day and Date, the very beginning of *Popiſh* Prieſt-craft will appear, which by good management heaping *Pelian* upon *Oſſa*, now one thing, and then another, it early arrived at that monſtrous heap of Irregularities, nay, Impieties it is now at in the Irregular uſe of the ſame in both Churches. Take it as it is with the beſt Conſtruction can be made of it. What Concord? what Agreement had it with the Government ſet forth in the Goſpel? even the ſame that Light hath with Darkneſs, and Chriſt with *Belial*.

To Day to burn Books and Tenets of Men as pious, and learned, and having as precious Souls to ſave as themſelves, and to morrow ſuſpend, and extravagantly puniſh Miniſters and others for writing Rebukes of Sin, or not reading a Book of Sports, or for Lecturing; Excommunicate others for not paying Fees, or not obſerving the Orders of their Courts, and of their Officers, Chancellors, Surrogates, Archdeacons, Officials, *Sumners*, *&c.* And if an Excommunicate

Perſon

Perſon come into the Church in the time of Divine Service, the Celebration thereof is to ceaſe: and a World of ſuch-like Fopperies. A ſpecial Goſpel Government, that Eccleſiaſticks need be ſo fond of! Can this be a Goſpel-Government, that conduces to no good end but to bring Griſts to their Mills, and an *odium* upon themſelves, and render them in ſome ſenſe worſe than the Furies of Hell, who only torment the guilty, but theſe vex the very Souls of Men as Righteous as themſelves? Which Government was partly obtained by Antichriſtian *Popiſh* Prieſt-craft, partly by the *ſupineneſs and negligence of the Brethren of former Ages of their own Rights and Priviledges*, partly by the Craft and Subtilty of proud, covetous, and ambitious *Popiſh* Clergy, and partly by *the careleſneſs of Princes*, who not willing to trouble themſelves with the Care of Religion, devolved it upon the Biſhops and Prieſts, by whom they were eaſily out-witted, and ſeduced, and ſo ſet up for themſelves.

I wonder what plain Text of Scripture ever gave the Prieſthood Authority to make Canons, curſe and ſuſpend, to impoſe and regulate, to bind and puniſh the Body of the Church, (which in plain *Engliſh* is putting the Cart before the Horſes,) the Church being to Regulate its own Concerns, and Body, and the Officers thereof, and not the Officers the Body: for by the Judgment of St. *Cyprian*, *The Practice of the pureſt Times, which were freeſt from corruption, even when Holy Martyrs were Biſhops, was, that Paſtors were ſubject to the Cenſure of the Church.* If this buſineſs were ſeriouſly inquired into, it would appear that there would be no need at all of this Eccleſiaſtical Government by Prieſts, as diſtinct from the Civil Chriſtian Government; and if there be, yet the *Body is to govern and regulate it ſelf, and not the Clergy and Officers thereof the Body.* Either this their Government is to be found in the *New Teſtament*, or it is not; if it had been there, it would have appeared long ago in the Conteſts between the Biſhops and the Presbyterians. But by both their Writings it manifeſtly appears, That neither the one Government nor the other (as it is now practiſed) is to be found therein, nor any other Government than what I have ſuccinctly deſcribed. What ſtrange Prieſts are theſe thus to uſurp wrong Powers, and make ſo very ill uſe of them, and yet expect to be had in Reverence of them over whom they ſo Tyrannize, by continuing the Uſurpation of ſuch wrong Powers, got by Prieſt-craft in Evil and *Popiſh* times? How can they expect that we ſhould hearken to, and believe them, Preaching Self denial and Reformation to us, when they hate to be reformed themſelves? They are called to be Prieſts and Biſhops, and make their *boaſts of God, that they know his Will*, and approve the things *that are more excellent*; and confidently brag, *that they are Guides to the Blind, Lights to them that are in Darkneſs, Inſtructers of the Fooliſh; and therefore you who teach others, why teach you not your ſelves? You that make your boaſts of the Law, through breaking of the Law, diſhonoreſt thou God?* Rom. 2. 17, 32. *is not this, with Demas, to love the preſent World, and with* Diotrephes *to love Prebeminence and Domination?* All Hiſtories, both Sacred and Prophane, ſwell with Out-cries and Exclamations againſt them, *as the Diſturbers of the common Peace of all* Europe, *as the Authors and Inſtruments of all Uproars, Seditions, Confuſions, and Wars.* Our own Church of *England* Men, and Biſhops, boaſted and ſignalized our firſt War 1639, (which was the Spawn of all that hath followed,) by the name of *Bellum Epiſcopale*; and not undeſervedly. Which *Royal Army*, tho' in its march they injured no Body, but rather inriched all places, yet ſo averſe was that War to the Genius of both Nations, that none of them could bid us God ſpeed, *as if God had ſtirred up the Spirit of theſe Nations, as he did the Spirits of* Pul *and* Tilgah Pilneſar, *Kings of* Aſſyria, whereby *vox Populi* became *vox Dei*; and it thrived accordingly.

If this their Government now in uſe be not to be found in Scripture, (as for certain it is not,) what is it elſe, than for the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy to make the Souls of Men ſubordinate to their Pride and Impery, and to intitle God himſelf to be the Author of all their Uſurpations, and to caſt upon him the Shame and Diſhonour of all their Oppreſſions and Violencies, by gilding over all their Impieties with the Varniſh of Religion, and by aſſuming the *Coverture and Canopy of Piety for a Cloak for their Impieties.* The *Pagans* were more modeſt towards their Gods, accounting *Diſſimulation meer Impoſture.*

Have they made it their Buſineſs, or improved their Intereſt, ſince his Majeſty's Reſtauration, to reſtore that *Tueſdays* Sermon at Court, which the Holy Martyr moſt Religiouſly obſerved? Have they countenanced Lectures on the Week-days, and Sermons in the Afternoon on the Sabbath-days? Run through all the Countries

Counties of the Nation, and matter of fact will clear the point. I appeal to God and their own Conſciences, and to *vox Populi* for the truth hereof. What violent ſuppreſſion hath there been of Conventicles, and Perſecution of the Conventiclers, (happily as great, if not greater than the Inquiſition abroad,) tho' uſed in pureſt times by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and recommended by them to all the faithful in general, by as true *Jure Divino* Precepts as Prieſts and Biſhops have for their teaching all Nations by *Matth.* 28. 19. and other plain Scriptures. To this Divine Prerogative and liberty of aſſembling of the faithful in general, for mutual and reciprocal Prophecying, Edification, Conſolation, Conferring, and Communicating their ſeveral and diverſities of Giſts and Graces, their own mutual progreſs, growth, and failings of their deſigns for Heaven, and to participate of each others Adviſoes and Prayers, and how to behave themſelves therein. As this is a Divine Prerogative given to all the Faithful by the Goſpel, ſo they may make uſe thereof in any Nation without asking leave of any body, and no Power ought to hinder them, nor can they hinder it without Sin. To this ſignal Priviledge St. *Paul* gives abundant teſtimony, 1 *Cor.* 14. This Epiſtle was written not to Prieſts in particular, but to the **Church of God in general**, *to them that are ſanctified in life, called to be Saints, with* **all** *that in every place call upon the Name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours*, 1 Cor. 1. 1. wherein **all the faithful**, whether **Prieſts** or not **Prieſts**, are commanded *to follow after Charity, and deſire ſpiritual Gifts, but rather that they may* **Propheſie.** By Prophets in this place are meant **all Believers in general**, thoſe within the Pale of the Church, excluding thoſe only without, as unfit to judge ſuch matters; and by **Propheſying** here is not meant the *Gifts of Prediction, or fore-telling events*, or things to come, but **ſpeaking unto Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort**: If therefore the **whole Church** (not **Prieſts only**) *come together in one place, and* **all ſpeak**, &c. ver. 23. *and* **all propheſie**, ver. 24. *and* **every one of you** *hath a* **Pſalm**, *hath a* **Doctrine**, ver. 26. *If* **any Man** *ſpeak*, ver. 27. *let the Prophets ſpeak* **two** *or* **three**, *and let the* **other judge**, ver. 29. *If* **any thing** *be revealed* **to another** *that* **ſitteth by**, *let the firſt* **hold his peace**, ver. 30. *for ye may* **all propheſie one by one**, *that* **all may learn**, *and* **all** *be* **comforted**, v. 31. *and the* **Spirits of the Prophets are ſubject to the Prophets**, v. 32. *let the* **women** *keep ſilence*, ver. 31. *wherefore* **brethren** *covet to propheſie*, ver. 39. Now if the words or terms of the **whole Church, all, every one, any Man, the other, another, Brethren**, be words and terms of univerſality and differencing, then certainly the Words, **Prophets**, and **Propheſying** in this Chapter are moſt eſpecially **applicable to the Brethren, to the Auditors.**

In this Chapter alſo are Inſtructions given, that **Women** in theſe Conventicles *do* **hold their peace**, ver. 31. *let* **all propheſie, one by one**, *that* **all** *may learn and be* **comforted**, *and* **all things** *be done* **decently and in order**; all which are **Commandments of the Lord**, ver. 37. If theſe be not **Divine Oracles** and **Precepts to all the Faithful to congregate** for the ends and purpoſes aforeſaid, then I underſtand neither plain Scripture nor plain *Engliſh*. But if any Men will underſtand God otherwiſe than he will be underſtood, and diſtinguiſh Scriptures, and model them to their own humour, and accept or reject his truth, as will beſt conſiſt with their own reſolutions, and by oblique Arts think to trick us out of our juſt Rights, I leave them to the juſt Judgment of God, who will judge Righteouſly. The Primitive and pureſt Churches were ſo gathered and ſo propagated.

Moreover the ſame Apoſtle re-inforceth the ſame Doctrine in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ch. 10. ver. 23, 24, 25. *to hold faſt the profeſſion of Faith without wavering,* **to conſider one another**, *to provoke unto love, and to good works,* **not forſaking the aſſembling of your ſelves together**, *as the manner of ſome is*, Heb. 10. 23, 24, 25. who (fearing the Breath of Fools, and that thereby their deſigns of Honours and Preferments, and other wretched Ends would be defeated,) dare not aſſemble to husband the precious moments of their lives to the advantage of their Maſter; what is this elſe but to beſpatter, and to have ſcornful and mean conceits of the humility of the ways of Chriſt, and of the ſimplicity of his Goſpel? Do they not rather betray much luke-warmneſs and indifferency, and walk in a Neutrality and Adiaphoriſm, between God and *Baal*? nay, much helliſhneſs and devilliſh Antipathy, to Chriſt and his ſtricteſt ſervice. *For in truth it is unbeſeeming, nor Prieſt, nor Prelate, but a duty incumbent upon them, to countenance and encourage Conventicles, or Aſſemblies, guilty of nothing*, (maugre all the falſe Aſperſions and Calumnies laid upon them by Men carried away with the ſtream of this wicked World, and the common prejudices and preſumptions of fooliſh Men,) *but of great Zeal to worſhip God, and ſave their own*

Souls, by beſieging and beſetting the Throne of Heaven with more ardent and retired Prayers and Conferences. Why do they thus mock God, *as one mocketh another?* Job. 13.9. Certainly it would better become them to be zealous for Piety and good Lives, becauſe vicious Habits are worſe than falſe Opinions. And it is not only a *duty incumbent* on *Prelate, Prieſt,* and *People,* but their *glory alſo,* to countenance every thing that is done to gain Souls to Chriſt, whether *in pretence or in truth,* Phil. 1.15, 16, 17, 18. and *nothing is unſeemly but vice.* Chriſtians indeed ought to abſtain from thoſe things which are repugnant to Chriſtian Profeſſion, which are Sins, *but whatſoever may be done without ſin is lawful for every man to do, and therefore may aſſemble.* Beſides nothing ought to be condemned or ſpoken ill of, that is capable of a good conſtruction, (of which nature are our Conventicles, and yet are reviled and evil ſpoken of by ſome, who have the *poyſon of Aſps under their Lips, and whoſe Throats are as open Sepulchers,*) becauſe it is not only humanity, but a *Goſpel Principle* to make the moſt favourable and charitable conſtruction of all Actions capable of a good and bad interpretation; for *charity thinketh no evil,* and we are commanded above all things *to have fervent Charity,* for that *ſhall cover a multitude of ſins,* 1 Pet. 4. 8. *and envieth not, is kind, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly,* (as they do that decry Conventicles, thereby giving great jealouſie, that in good earneſt they eſteem that *Ordinance fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, deſperately contemning the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel,) *thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things,* 1 Cor. 13. and I fear that they that have not this Charity towards ſuch Conventicles, their *Charity is but as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal*; and you know that *Revilers* are in the black Catalogue of the damned Crew, mentioned 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. and by ſo judging they *preſcribe* for themſelves, and *prejudge* themſelves. *Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged. Why beholdeſt thou the moat that's in thy Brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?* Matth. 7. 1, 2, 3. *Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. Yea he ſhall be holden up, for God is able to make him ſtand,* Rom. 14. 4. *and God alone is Judge of erring Perſons. Beſides, I know no Power on Earth that hath lawful Authority to forbid any Man to Preach the Goſpel; or that they that are called to Preach are obliged to ask leave of any other to Preach the Goſpel either publickly or privately.* Chriſt and his Apoſtles, notwithſtanding all Threatnings and Impriſonments, Prohibitings, Scourgings, what not? yet preached the Goſpel both openly in their Synagogues and in the Temple; and alſo *privately by ſtealth, even at midnight, breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe,* till they loſt their lives for ſo doing; which they would not have done had it been unlawful ſo to have done. For my part I am of Opinion, *That our love to the Bretheren, is the beſt and moſt manifeſt evidence of our love to God,* and the beſt Rule whereby to meaſure our love to him; and I hope I ſhall never eminently ſee the Image of Chriſt in any Man (*Conventicler* or not *Conventicler*) but ſhall love him more dearly for it, and abhor my ſelf for being ſo much unlike him. *Why doſt thou judge thy Brother? or why doſt thou ſet at naught thy Brother? for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt,* Rom. 14. 10. *And God will meaſure us by his own Line, and by his own Plummet. Deus bone!* unto what then doth all this *Gall of Aſps, theſe Throats as wide as open Sepulchers,* decrying Conventicles and perſecuting of them, tend? out of Zeal to the more ſtrict and pure ways of ſerving God? not poſſible! it rather gives more occaſions of greater Fears and Jealouſies of more rancourous conſtitution of Hearts, againſt ſubmitting to the narrow and more ſtrict Rules of the Apoſtles, of *abſtaining from all appearance of Evil, of reſiſting unto Blood, ſtriving againſt ſin,* of endeavouring to be *holy as our Heavenly Father is Holy; and perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.*

And certainly, it is much more agreeable to the Mind of Chriſt to Conventicle with Aſſemblies of the Faithful, than to be *blind watch men, ignorant, dumb Dogs, that cannot bark, ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber: yea, greedy Dogs that cannot have enough: ſhepherds that cannot underſtand, that look to their own way, every one for his gain,* Iſai. 56. 10, 11. *that feed themſelves, but not the flock,* Ezek. 34. 2, 3, 4. Such as theſe are they that *teach for hire, and divine for money*; that foiſt their own *Straw and Stubble upon the foundation laid by Chriſt our Lord*; that will underſtand God otherwiſe than he will be underſtood, and will not account that ſenſe of Scripture trueſt, that moſt reſtraineth their corrupt humours, that thwarteth and croſſeth their high imaginations and deſigns. *We have with us, and amongſt us, thouſands that ask Counſel at their Stocks, and whoſe Staff declareth unto them; for the ſpirit of whoredoms hath cauſed them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God,*

Hoſ.

Hoſ. 4. 12. and yet not excommunicated, nor ſo ſeverely perſecuted as thoſe that Conventicle and Aſſemble with the Brotherhood. We have alſo with us thouſands of worthy, very worthy, pious and learned Prelates, Prieſts and People, that labour in the Word and Doctrine, and mourn in ſecret for the violences done to ſuch Aſſemblies, in whom the Light of the Glorious Goſpel moſt eminently and glorioufly ſhineth, and who preach and practice God's pure and ſincere Ordinances; ſo that no Nation under Heaven hath them more purely taught and exalted in Mercies than our own.

It is the rotten part of the Clergy only, whoſe Popiſh and other Books, publiſhing Doctrines deſtructive to whole Kingdoms, only herein meant, that occaſions ſuch contempt of the Clergy; the very tail of Prieſts, *Iſai.* 9. 15. that teach Lyes, and Doctrines that ſubject the whole Race of Mankind unto ſlavery and vaſſallage, whoſe Hearts, the love of the World, of Riches, Honours and Preferments, hath debauched and prevailed with to hearken to the Fleſh, when ſhe pleads her ſecular contentments: no need of this zeal, this accurateneſs, this preſſing, this violence for Heaven; and upon preſumptuous and falſe prejudices, to account ſuch ſtrictneſs unneceſſary, preſuming on the eaſineſs of a future Reformation, not conſidering that the leaſt ſin doth defile the Soul, and that the ſmalleſt omiſſion qualifie for Hell; but can delight in ſinful and deſperate fellowſhips, bleſſing themſelves in their own wickedneſs, and yet revile, and malign our Conventicles, (much better imployed than themſelves,) being bewitcht to dote on preſent Contentments, to diſpence with much unjuſt Liberty, uſing lawful things unlawfully, to ſteal even from God's own Day, to gratifie their own *corrupt humours and fleſhly deſires*, Rom. 8. 5, 6, 7, & 13, 14. by promoting and countenancing a *Book of Sports*, but diſcountenancing and prohibiting Sermons on Sundays in the Afternoon, and Lectures on the Week-days. Pulpit-preaching is the leaſt part of a Miniſters work: *Paul taught from houſe to houſe day and night with tears*, Acts 20. 20. Moſt certainly St. *Paul* was more Heavenly minded, *who accounted all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge* (not notional only, but experimental alſo,) *of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; for whom he ſuffered the loſs of all things, and accounted them but dung, that he might win Chriſt*, Phil 3.9. If theſe ſticklers againſt Conventicles did but live now as they will wiſh they had done when they come to die, (a time ſpeedily approaching,) they would be of another mind, and would not be of the *Bedlam* opinion of the World, who like not ſuch zeal, ſuch ſtrictneſs, ſuch violence for Heaven. *Aſſembling together for edification and comfort, is a Command from Heaven, and no human Law ought to contradict it*; nor hath any Government more Power to forbid private than publick preaching of the Goſpel. *Human Laws and Ordinances, or Cuſtoms againſt the Law of God, or Nature, are corruption, and derogate from the Authority of the Almighty, and are* ipſo facto *void and null.*

Pope *Paul* the Fourth uſually curſed Colloquies, Councils, Dyets, for that they were always upon his Back. I lay no ſuch charge to our Clergy, that do not favour or fancy ſuch Conventicles. But I vehemently ſuſpect that they look upon them as reproaches to themſelves, as being the more diligent, and the more laborious, and the more zealous *in the Word and Doctrine* than themſelves. Theſe differences would not be, if they would be governed according to the Scriptures, (which ought to be the rule of Reſolutions, without reſpect to private Ends and worldly Intereſts,) and manifeſt Vices corrected according to the Word of God. For which Reaſons I conceive it a *Spiritual Tyranny* to forbid the Aſſembling of Bretheren together for the glory of God, the increaſe of Godlineſs, and of Brotherly Love among the Faithful: And therefore conclude, that ſuppreſſing ſuch Conventicles cannot proceed from that *Wiſdom which is from above*; *which is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſie*, James 3. 17. but from that *wiſdom which is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* For why ſhould not that Liberty be granted to this Age, which other Ages have enjoyed with Spiritual Fruit, even in the infancy and pureſt Ages of the Church, and when all Nations were bitter and accurſed Enemies to Chriſt and his Goſpel. Certainly, to forbid the Faithful to aſſemble, to improve, and make uſe of their proper Gifts and Graces in publick or in private, to bring Souls to Heaven, cannot proceed from any good intent: For the Holy Ghoſt is not the Clergy Peculiar, but *variety of Spiritual Gifts and Graces* belongs ſo *eſſentially* to the *perfection* of the Church, that it is the *very glory thereof, and of every individual.* We are all ſo addicted to Sin, and ſo prone to Impieties, that all the allurements and intice-

ments

ments to holy living, ought to be encouraged, not diſcountenanced nor prohibited, leſt the care of ſtrict Piety, and exact walking in the ways of Holineſs be abandoned. And thoſe Solemn Aſſemblies are but to husband the precious moments of life, (for one Hour whereof, tormented Souls in Hell would give all the World (if they had the diſpoſal thereof) to be but in the ſame poſſibilities of Salvation to make their Peace and Reconciliation with their provoked God.) to the *advantage of the Lord of the Harveſt, that when he comes he may find them ſo doing.*

It ſeems very ſtrange to thinking Men, and to right Reaſon it ſelf, *to deprive Men of their true Spiritual Liberty, and their juſt Right, and then perſwade them to be content*, and ſpeak evil of them, accounting them Seditious, Schiſmatical, and Phanatical, if they do not acquieſce. And they are not only againſt the liberty of Propheſie, but of the Preſs alſo. A ſhrewd ſign that they diſguiſe the truth, and are afraid to be diſcovered, and that they do diſtruſt the Judgment of the World upon ſuch their Actions. For it is a *derogation to Faith to dread the publiſhing of Truths.*

All the World hath ever complained of the Vices, Incroachments, and Male-government of the Clergy, attributing the cauſe of all State Diſtempers to be, that the Clergy did creep into, and *buſie themſelves* in the *Courts of Princes*, and in the Affairs of the *World*, being *Judges, Chancellors, Secretaries, Treaſurers*; What not? there being but few Officers of State into which ſome Eccleſiaſticks have not inſinuated themſelves and crept in, which is to *ridicule Religion, and ſhamefully to confound Spiritual and Temporal things together*; which is altogether *Unapoſtolical.* This I am ſure is forbidden by St. *Paul*, and the *whole tenor of the Scripture*, who thought it neceſſary, *that a Soldier of the Church ſhould abſtain from Secular imployments*, 2 Tim. 2. 4. for Chriſtianity is a continual Warfare, they would take it very ill, if one ſhould ſay that Prieſthood were not *Jure Divino*; and happily well they may: and I doubt they will take it as ill, if we ſay, that becauſe it is *Jure Divino*, therefore *no Prieſt*, from the *Presbyter to the Pope*, ought to buſie themſelves, or take any Secular Imployment, that may any way impede their daily Miniſtrations, diſtract or avert their Thoughts, or neceſſarily enforce their abſence. *Vid. Canon. Apoſt.* 7. 80. And in the Eccleſiaſtical Laws there is a whole Title, *Ne Clerici vel Monachi ſecularibus negotiis inniſceant.*

Pope *Clement* the Seventh, to ſerve a turn, made all demonſtration, that he had laid aſide all thoughts of Temporal things. I could wiſh our Prieſts would do it in good earneſt.

And St. *Chryſoſtom* hath a long diſcourſe complaining of *Clergy-men* leaving the *care of Souls* and become *Proctors, Economiſts*, &c. Preaching things unbeſeeming the Miniſtery: And it is not only againſt Precept Divine, but againſt Moral and Natural Right, as appeareth *Luke* 10. 7. and *Matth.* 10. 10. 1 *Tim.* 5. 18. It is *the labourer, the workman*, (not the laſie drone and loyterer,) *that is worthy of his hire, his meat, and his reward.* It is they *who miniſter* (not they who do not miniſter) *about holy things*, that have right *to live of the things of the Temple*; *and they that wait* (not they that do not wait) *at the Altar*, (not at the Court, or on Secular Imployments) *that have right to be partakers of the Altar*; for the *Lord hath ſo ordained, that they which preach* (not they who preach not) *the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. For Prieſthood was at firſt inſtituted not for Honours, nor for Dignities, nor for Rewards, (as now uſed, and have been ſo uſed many hundreds of Years,) *but for Miniſteries and Charges*, called by St. *Paul*, *Works*; and thoſe that exerciſe them, called by Chriſt, *Workmen*; tho Prieſt-craft hath turned them into Benefices. For Prieſts are moſt properly *God's Workmen.* And St. *Paul*'s practice was anſwerable to his Doctrine; and the charge is given, *Rom.* 12. 7, 8. *to wait on that office whereunto we are called, whether to propheſy, let us propheſy*; *according to the proportion of faith, or miniſtery, let us wait on our miniſtery*; *or he that teacheth, on teaching*, &c. Where there *is a Commandment, there lies a Bond upon the Conſcience to do.* To Preach the Goſpel there is a Duty ever binding a Miniſter, with a woe annexed if he Preach not.

Moreover, the work of *Preaching* is ſo much *more excellent above all other Acts of the Miniſtery*, that for my part I cannot imagine what that great and important buſineſs of the Miniſtery can be, to which it can become preaching to ſubmit, I am ſure not Sacraments; (and if not Sacraments, I am ſure nothing more excellent.) *Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 1. 17. he might as well have ſaid, not to domineer, not to do any thing in this ſenſe comparatively, as he deſires to be underſtood. Beſides, is there any thing more honourable? Hear the ſame

Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *the Elders that rule well are worthy of double honour.* Call it *Reverence* or *Maintenance*, or both; however, *a ſpecialty* in it belongs to them *that labour in the Word and Doctrine.* And it is moſt certain, that more ſound honour is to be gained in the Hearts of the People by Preaching, than by all outward helps whatſoever. What ſay I? honour amongſt Men? yea, more comfort to their Conſciences, and glory in God's Kingdom. Hear *Solomon*, Prov. 11. 30. *he that winneth Souls is wiſe: and* Daniel 12. 3. *they that turn others to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars in the firmament:* And *Paul* 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 19. *What is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoycing? are you not it in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming?* What comfort like this? when a Miniſter comes before the Lord, the great Shepheard of the Sheep, with the word of *Iſaiah* applied to our Saviour? *Lo, me and the Children thou haſt given me*, Iſai. 8. 18. *the Sons and Daughters which by thy bleſſing I have begotten unto thee in the Goſpel.* One of the Apoſtles, on whoſe Shoulders lay the *care of all the Churches*, yet denounces *woe to himſelf, if he preach not the Goſpel.* And *Timothy* hath that charge laid on him, with an heavy adjuration to preach the Word, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2.

Beſides, their very Prieſthood obligeth them to be *Watchmen*, and therefore to *watch continually on their Miniſtry*; and if any of their Flock miſcarry thro' their unwatchfulneſs, *their blood will be required at their hands*; and they cannot be ignorant that *Sathan*, with millions of ſins and ſtratagems, are ever beſieging, inticing, clamoring, haling, rebelling, intruding with Love, with Strength, with Law, with Arguments, with Importunities, always importuning and diverting their Flocks from the right way, and therefore they ought always to ſtand Sentinel to forewarn and help.

Certainly if the Apoſtles were ſo Puritanical, ſo Phanatical, ſo Whiggiſh, and ſo ſcrupulous of entertaining any Imployment, tho' never ſo Pious, and Charitable, that might any way in the leaſt hinder the main end of their Duty; *viz. to preach the Goſpel*: I humbly conceive that our Biſhops and Prieſts (accounting themſelves ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, and ſent as they were ſent,) ought alſo to follow their Doctrine and Examples as well in this particular as in any other. And ſith the Lords proviſion for *Levites* was ſo made, that they might attend the Altar, and wait continually on the Sanctuary, without the diſtraction and cumber of any civil Imployments; I cannot ſee how plunging, conflicting earthly Imployments can conſiſt with the duty and charge of a Miniſter, and execution of his Commiſſion, ſeeing to preach the Goſpel being a duty ever binding Miniſters, *with a Woe annexed if they preach not: Woe to the idle ſhepherds if they preach not*, Ezek. 34. 2. as heavy, as to thoſe that *are at eaſe in Sion.* They cannot be ignorant that Chriſt hath ſervice much more than enough (without Secular Imployments) to take up all the Might, Strengths, Studies, Abilities, Times, Callings of all his ſervants, (eſpecially thoſe of the Miniſtry) whoſe peculiar Duty it is to teach others, and *watch over them, and muſt give an account of them*, that they may be always worſhipping, communing of him, and converſant with him, and *Enoch*-like walk all the day long with him, not minding their own things only, but the things of others alſo, that as Inſtruments and fellow Members, by taking the hint of every fit opportunity they ſhall be put upon by the way of Providence, and may be always Exhorting, Reproving, Directing, Inſtructing, Reſtoring, Relieving and Helping others, always Mourning, Rejoycing, Praying with their Flocks, and ſerving them in all ways of Love, always doing that which may bring in moſt Spiritual good to themſelves and their Flocks, moſt true comfort to their own Souls and their Flocks, and moſt glory to their Maker and Redeemer, (which is the true end and deſign of Conventicling) and which the abſurd love and attendance of the World is too prevalent to ſteal from us and to cheat us of, tho' things of moſt precious ſpiritual and everlaſting conſequence. They cannot be ignorant, *that if the ſeed be ſown among thorns, that the cares of this World, and the deceitfulneſs of Riches, and the luſts of other things*, (fears of diſappointment and miſcarriage of earthly Ends and Intereſts) *entring in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*, Mark 4. 18, 19.

Eraſmus was wont to ſay of *Luther*, That he medled with two precious but dangerous concerns, when he touched the *Popes Crowns* and the *Monks Bellies*, who are apt enough, even whilſt *their Meat is yet in their Mouths*, whilſt *diſtenti & crepantes* to cry out, *Heu quanta patimur?* But if *Socrates* ſay true, *Monachus qui non laborat manibus ſimilis eſt prædoni*; *Thoſe Prieſts that feed themſelves, and do not feed the Flock*, whether through Lazineſs, or multitude of Secular Imployments, are at beſt but

Pillagers and *Robbers*, even *Locuſts* that eat up the beſt of the Fruit of the Church and Eccleſiaſtical preferments: for which ſevere Character I have *Ezek.* 34. for my undoubted warrant.

Certainly it is no very wild conjecture of him who hath printed, that nothing offended *Julian the Apoſtate* ſo much, or was ſo great an occaſion of his Apoſtatizing, as were the *Vices and vile Hypocriſie of the then Chriſtian Clergy*; who, beſides their coining of *contrary Creeds* in the Reigns of *Conſtantine* and *Conſtantius*, and modelling Religion by *Court Intrigues*, which ſeemed almoſt wholy to diſpence even with Morality, placing Sanctimony not ſo much in a Holy Life as in the ſtrict obſervance of their *Rituals*, and the *Symbolical Repreſentations* of Chriſtian Religion, ſuch as *Baptiſm*, the *Euchariſt*, *Chriſm*; but above all, in ſubmitting to the formalities of *Confeſſion*, *Penance*, *Indulgences*, *Abſolutions*, *Holy Water*, &c. upon which the *greateſt Sins were ſo eaſily remitted*. What Fleſh could indure to hear the Murderers of ones *Father*, *Uncle*, *two Brothers*, *ſix Couſin Germans*, harangue to Heaven in Pulpits as Saints, becauſe (forſooth) abſolv'd by their own Friends the Prieſts, who haply ſet them on work? The ground of this his conjecture is, becauſe *Julian* is not ſo Satyrical on any occaſion as upon this. In his *Cæſars*, we find this flouting out-cry; *viz.* ὅστις φθορεὺς. *Ho! whoever is either Sodomite, Murderer, Rogue, or Villain, let him dread nothing, but repair hither, with this Water I'll make him clean in a trice; and if he ſhall happen* (as human Nature is frail) *to reiterate the ſame Crimes, if he will but thump his Breaſt, and box his Noddle, I'll warrant him as innocent as the Child unborn.*

Tho' this *Julian* (a Man of excellent Parts and Learning) became an accurſed *Apoſtate*, yet he was againſt thoſe that diſcountenanc'd and perſecuted Men of honeſt Principles, and againſt thoſe that paid devout Viſits to the Bones of dead Friars, calling them *Holy Reliques*, and the like. This fully appears by his Epiſtle to the Citizens of *Boſtra*, wherein he complains of his Predeceſſor, *for Perſecuting, Impriſoning and Baniſhing many of them; nay whole Corporations of them they term Hereticks, were put to the Sword, inſomuch that at* Samoſata, Cizicum, Paphlagonia, Bythinia, Galatia, *and many other Countries, and whole Towns were laid level with the Earth*; whereas *Julian* himſelf practiſed the clean contrary, *recalling the exiled home, and reſtoring ſuch as were proſcrib'd, their own intire; and vehemently complaining of the Clergy acting as Tyrants, not as Men, as above the controul of Laws, and that upon one another; and he laid the cauſe of all Tumults, Inſurrections, and Tyranny, to the ſeduction of thoſe they call Clergy: and all becauſe they are reſtrain'd from their former exceſſes; and becauſe they may not be Judges, nor make Peoples Wills, and poſſeſs themſelves of other Mens Patrimonies, and ſo get all into their own Clutches*; quo jure quâve injuriâ: *and therefore adviſed the Laity, not to tumultuate with the Clergy, but to live in Peace one with another:* and commanded, *that in no wiſe any Injury, Affront, or Abuſe ſhould be offered to the* Galilæan *Laity, for that Men ought to be brought over by Reaſon and Perſwaſion, and not by ill Uſage, Blows, and Stripes.* I wiſh all our moſt Chriſtian Kings had imitated him in this particular.

I know I am harping upon an unpleaſing String, but it matters not, I am at a point for that, it may cruſh Arts and deſigns of Wealth, Honour, Preferments, and Plauſibility; but God can recompence, maugre all black Mouths that may either barke or bite. *Magna eſt veritas & prevalebit.* Theſe are not my ſentiments alone, but they have been the complaints of many Generations, both of Lay and Eccleſiaſticks. Witneſs *Guicciardine*, *Sleydan*, *Thuanus*, *Padre Paolo*, and others. Even in the Council of *Trent* ſome were ſo honeſt as to make the ſame complaints, and deſire Reformation of them, averring, that all the evil did ariſe from the large Donations of the Church, *eſpecially that of Juriſdiction*; a thing inconvenient, *that they who ought to give themſelves to Prayer and Preaching, ſhould exerciſe Power which is no ways eſſential to their Calling*, nor was ever receiv'd immediately from Chriſt, nor any Authority ever given by Chriſt, but what was *meerly and purely Spiritual:* but that packt Conventicle was not ſo honeſt as to redreſs them.

Dr. *Jeremy Taylor*, Lord Biſhop of *Down* and *Connaught*, hath written a very learned Diſcourſe, juſtifying the *liberty of Propheſying*, &c. and *Naked Truth*, (ſuppoſed to have been written by another *worthy Prelate*,) makes the like complaints, and laments them. Of all which more largely in *Jus Cæſaris & Eccleſiæ vere dictæ.*

As to the Reformation of them, *Religion* was certainly then moſt pure and ſincere when there was not one Ceremony uſed, nor one Biſhop nor Prieſt ingaged in Secular Imployments. And no Reformation can be ſo good, ſo pure, as that which doth

doth reduce things to their firſt innocent Beginnings and Inſtitutions; againſt which no Objection can reaſonably be made. The Primitive Church did continue very many Years in perfection, with increaſe of Saints, and propagation of the Goſpel, without the uſe of any Ceremonies, or ſuppreſſing any holy Aſſemblies, (Conventicles,) or Excommunicating, as now uſed, or any Prieſt imployed in Secular Affairs in Princes Courts, and the purity thereof can by this means only be reſtored; they knew full well that the Kingdom of God did not conſiſt in *Cringings, Ceremonies, Veſtments*, or *Colours*, but in *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt*, Rom. 14. 17. and may be ſo governed again, if the Clergy would give it countenance and encouragement, and be as active in good earneſt to diveſt themſelves of all Temporal Dominion, *and be content to live the life and practice of the Apoſtles*, (yet with plentiful Revenues,) as they are to perſecute their fellow Members in Chriſt for acting as the Apoſtles taught and did.

Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Prelates, be inſtructed ye Prieſts of the moſt High, do not *offend little ones* that believe in their and your God, and that aſſemble in ſecret to imploy and improve precious time, and holy Talents; *its better a Milſtone were hanged about your necks, and you drowned in the depth of the Sea*, Mat. 18. than that you ſhould be found guilty of ſuch offence: remember that he that *toucheth ſuch, toucheth the Apple of his Eye*, Zach. 2. 8. If they are weak in Faith, *yet receive them, but not to doubtful diſputations*, Rom. 14. 12. and 15. 1. for he *that eateth, and he that eateth not*, and he that conformeth, and he that conformeth not, may both meet in Heaven and ſee the Face of God with comfort. *It is hard kicking againſt the pricks: if briars and thorns will ſet themſelves in battle againſt the Lord, he will go through them, and burn them with unquenchable fire*, Iſai. 27. 4.

To me it ſeems marvellous, nay monſtruous, that Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould preach pure Doctrine, Holineſs, and Strictneſs of Life and Converſation, and that moſt Zealouſly, and yet at the ſame time, in the ſame Pulpit, revile and ſpeak evil of Miniſters of the ſame Goſpel, preaching the ſame Doctrines as fervently as themſelves, in private Aſſemblies or Conventicles, and out of their Pulpits to rail, perſecute, and trouble thoſe that practiſe the ſame Doctrines that they themſelves teach them, differing from them only about things indifferent. *Doth a fountain ſend forth ſweet water and bitter?* James 3. 11, 12. Are theſe Paſtors according to God's own Heart? Is this to feed us with Knowledg and Underſtanding? *Jer.* 3. 15. Is it not rather to be bruitiſh in Knowledg? *Jer.* 10. 15. Falſeſt Prieſts! that teach one thing, and yet revile and perſecute them that practiſe it; to me it ſeems impoſſible, that there ſhould be ſincerity in ſuch Pulpits: is not this to prevaricate with God and Man, *to ſpeak lyes in hypocriſie?* and by ſlight *and cunning craftineſs lie in wait to deceive? Will you talk deceitfully for God? or as one man mocketh another, will you ſo mock him?* Job. 13. 7, 9.

Tho' I thus argue, yet am of Opinion, that the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* are ſo innocent, that they may be, and are uſed with very good Conſcience by ſome, and may be injoyned. But I know no Power under Heaven that hath *lawful Authority* rigorouſly to command ſubmiſſion to them *upon Penalties and Severities*, that if any through either indiſcreet Zeal, or truly conſcientious Scrupuloſities cannot uſe them, they muſt not therefore preach the Goſpel either publickly or privately, or partake of Church Offices and Benefices. O! they are things indifferent, and may be commanded: be it ſo. And therefore they ought ſo to continue, and not be made neceſſary by any commands of Men. Let them ſo continue, and Unity will neceſſarily enſue. Rites and Ceremonies, tho' by nature indifferent, do then become bad, and of ill conſequence, when impoſed under Penalties, and when they that do impoſe them have an Opinion, that they are good or neceſſary. *Preaching, and Praying, and Aſſembling are of abſolute neceſſity; uſe of Ceremonies not ſo.* And the Holy Ghoſt would have no greater burthen impoſed, than *things neceſſary*, Acts 15. 28. To preſs theſe things ſo ſeverely, is with the *Miniſters of Jeroboam, to lay ſnares in Miſpah, and ſpread nets upon Tabor*, Hoſ. 5. 1. And to ſham, and uſe Laws, Menaces, and Subtleties, to keep the People from God's Temple and Sanctuary, and to ſmother and diſſemble the ſtrictneſs and purity of God's Holy Ways; but *the righteous Lord will hew the ſnares of the ungodly in pieces*, Pſalm 129. 4. Preaching of the Goſpel, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, are things commanded by God, and therefore ought not to be forbidden by Men, *and are ſo far exempt from human Laws, that the prohibition of them is of no force*; it being in ſuch caſes *better to obey God than Man*, Acts 5. 22. and for that no Man's right ought to be

be denied him either in things Civil, or Spiritual, for fear they ſhould abuſe it, for that then no Man's Right ſhall be preſerved ſafe and intire unto him. And for certain God hath given no Power at all, either to Princes or Prelates, but what is accompanied with Divine Wiſdom and Sincerity; and therefore to forbid any to preach the Goſpel, becauſe they refuſe to ſubmit and conform to commands of things indifferent, and *no way Eſſential to the ſaving of Souls, or to the Sincerity or Purity of the Goſpel*, is utterly unlawful and ſinful, and as arrant perſecution as was that of the *Jews* towards the Apoſtles, and no ways to be countenanced in a Chriſtian State: but ſuch Abuſe of Power is a plain demonſtration *that they hate them that rebuke in the Gate, and abhor them that ſpeak uprightly*, Amos 5. 10.

Beſides, the matters in Difference between Conformiſt and Non-conformiſt are confeſſed by both to be but about things indifferent, and therefore *ought not to be impoſed neceſſarily, becauſe their impoſition cannot be juſtified infallibly, and becauſe indeterminate by plain Scripture, and therefore can have no warrant from them.* What are we then to conceive of thoſe our Eccleſiaſticks, who have been ſo far from promoting ſuch a Reformation, that they have always oppoſed it with ſtrong oppoſition? Witneſs of late Days their earneſt and importunate ſolicitations of the Members of both Houſes of Parliament, to Repeal that Act of Parliament made 17 *Car.* diſenabling all Perſons in Holy Orders to exerciſe any Temporal Juriſdiction or Authority; which by good management they have effected by another Act made 13 *Car.* 2. by which they are now re-inſtated on the old rotten Papal Foundation, and are at ſuch eaſe therein, that if any do but mutter or peep againſt it, they are ready, with the two Men in the Goſpel poſſeſſed with Devils coming out of the Tombs, exceeding fierce, and to cry out, *Why are you come to torment us before the time?* Matth. 8. 28, 29. Are not ſuch *Prieſts thoſe that teach for hire, and Prophets that divine for money, and pimp for domination?* Mich. 3. 11. *and Demas-like forſake the fellowſhip of Saints, and embrace this preſent World?* So that unleſs the Apoſtles return from Heaven, or that Chriſt himſelf come again in Perſon and laſh them, (as he did the Buyers and Sellers) out of the Temple, I ſee ſmall hopes of Eſtabliſhing the Government of the Church on a right Baſis: If they would be active in good earneſt to diveſt themſelves of all Temporal Domination and Juriſdiction, and content to be reduced to *the life and practiſe of the Apoſtles*, as they are to perſecute their fellow Members for Conventicling, we might be happy.

Yet I muſt do the right Reverend Author of *Naked Truth* that right, 'That if the 'Eccleſiaſticks were all of his mind, and firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God, it would 'eaſily be done: and I do with him humbly conceive, That the Biſhops with the 'reſt of the Clergy are bound in Conſcience to implore the Aſſiſtance of both 'Houſes of Parliament to Petition his Majeſty for the Redreſs of the Abuſes by 'Pious Laws, ſettling the Church Government in the Primitive Purity, and Au'thority; which moſt evidently was very great, and as greatly reverenced, Biſhops 'and Prieſts being the Perſons to whom Chriſt and his Apoſtles committed the Souls 'of Men bought with his moſt precious Blood.

Therefore I think they do ſuch Clergy-men (not Prieſthood, not Epiſcopacy, not true Church of *England* Men,) no wrong, who eſteem them (as they manage their matters) the very *worſt Intereſt* that Proteſtant Kings and Kingdoms have, but that of the *Papiſts*. Theſe Animoſities and Differences have been ever ſince the beginning of the Reformation, between the Conforming and Non-conforming Clergy, and (I may truly propheſie) ever will be, ſo long as Conſcience ſhall be on the Earth, and as long as Miniſters will not be Servants but Lords over Gods heritage, and will not condeſcend to let things made by God Almighty indifferent, ſo to be and remain. The Reaſons are pregnant, for that Conſcience will be Conſcience while the World ſtands; and therefore there ever will be Scrupuloſities and Obligations upon Conſcience, which are greater than all other Obligations in the World: And therefore King *James* the Firſt would ſay, (and that truly) That the *Puritans* were never to be obliged, and for that Reaſon. Whereas if things indifferent might ſo remain, and the Conventiclers permitted to preach in publick, (to take away all Fears, Jealouſies, and Suſpicion,) we ſhould be all at quiet, for then there would not be left ſo much as the *pretence of Religion* to occaſion Diſſentions or Quarrels.

Beſides,

Beſides, it is the *time-ſerving Clergy only*, the Drones, that vilifies and abaſeth, that caluminates and diſturbs the Diſſenters, and not the Diſſenters them. Extremities uſed againſt them at their Inſtigation, Silencing, Impriſoning, Excommunicating, making uſe of Laws againſt them, that in their primary, ſimple and ſincere Inſtitution were intended and enacted againſt *Papiſts only*, and they not proceeded againſt ſo violently, according to thoſe very Laws in full force againſt them, as againſt the *Non conformiſts*, who have been Indicted under the Notion of *Popiſh Recuſants*, and Penalties levied upon them, and the *Papiſts* either totally connived at, or remiſsly proſecuted; many Crimes, through *ungrounded prejudices*, laid to their charge, (as diſturbing of the Government,) which they abhor and teach not, of which they are no otherways guilty, than by that Logick, that the Fox his Ears on his Head were Horns, meer Surmizes, Calumnies, and Libels, and nothing proved, but that *contrary to a human Law*, they (following the Command and Example of Chriſt and his Apoſtles) meet and aſſemble together to keep a more intimate, near, and dear Communion with their and our God, and with one another, and to make Peace and Reconciliation with God, whilſt they are yet in the way, yet in the poſſibility of Salvation; *which Law* in it ſelf is null and void, becauſe it contradicts the Law of God, which Commands *all Men every where to call on the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, and all *Prieſts to teach all Nations*, Baptizing, *&c.* and to *preach in every Church in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon*, &c. *to reprove, exhort, rebuke, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine*, 2 Tim. Is not this with the *Prieſts of old, and the Captain of the Temple, to be grieved at the heart that they teach the People? and therefore laid hands on them, and put them in hold: and like Elymas the ſorcerer, being full of all ſubtilety and all miſchief, children of the Devil, enemies of all righteouſneſs, never ceaſing to pervert the right ways of the Lord*, Act. 4. 2. and 13. 10. But *lying lips ſhall be put to ſilence: which ſpeak grievous things proudly and contemptuouſly againſt the righteous*, Pſalm 31. 18. It was St. *Paul*'s Glory that Chriſt *was preached any way, though through ſtrife or vain glory*: and I fear it is the glory of the more violent and haughty *Tory* Church of *England* Party, (as the road to Preferment,) to decry Conventicling and Preaching contrary to *ſuch a Law*, and to ſtop the Mouths of them that would Preach; whereby they intitle themſelves to the Character of the Shepherds deſcribed and deciphered, *Iſai.* 56. 10, 11. 35 *Eliz.*

Conſider, that in Preaching contrary to *ſuch a Law*, they do no more than what Chriſt and his Apoſtles did in their Days. *The Rulers of the* Jews, *offended with* Peter's *Sermon, impriſoned him and* John; *and having ſtrictly examined them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the Name of Jeſus.* Did they therefore forbear Preaching? or were they obedient to ſuch Commands of the Rulers? I tell you nay; but anſwered and ſaid unto them, *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*; *and continued ſpeaking the Word of God with great boldneſs*, Acts 4. The like did the reſt of the Apoſtles, even *from houſe to houſe*; *though accuſed of turning the World up-ſide down, and of doing contrary to the decrees of Cæſar, yet preaching the Word of God boldly*, Act. 17. 26. Either the Author to the *Hebrews* Preacht falſe Doctrine, when he exhorteth us *to conſider one another, to provoke unto Love, and to good Works, not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* And ſo did St. *Paul* when he wrote his *Chap.* 14. to the *Corinthians*, wherein he adviſeth all *to deſire Spiritual gifts*; *but rather that they may propheſie, that they may ſpeak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort, when the Church is come together in one place*; with particular Directions how all ſhould behave themſelves in ſuch Aſſemblies, *that all may profit*; with a general Rule, *that all things be done decently, and in order.* Either, I ſay, theſe Apoſtles taught falſe Doctrines in ſo Teaching; or elſe they that preach and prate againſt ſuch Aſſembling, (as the manner of ſome is,) are falſe Teachers. I know no *medium*, take it as you pleaſe.

Can it be imagined that if St. *Paul* (*who rejoyced that Chriſt was preached in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, though out of envy and ſtrife; though not ſincerely, though but in pretence, and not in truth,*) were living now, and here, would condemn our Conventicles, or would not rather be in the midſt of them himſelf? I appeal to God and your own Conſciences, if you your ſelves ought not to *continue ſtedfaſt in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread from Houſe to Houſe, and Prayers.*

If Conventicles in our Days do endeavour to come as near as they can to continue ſtedfaſt in the Doctrine and Fellowſhip of the Apoſtles, why ſhould they be interrupted? Were not *Spiritual Men mad*, doting upon mediocrities of Grace, they would never *burleſque the purity and ſimplicity of the Goſpel*, nor the moſt ſtrict ways of Piety, and by *ungrounded prejudices* miſ-judge them, as Shagreen to good Government. According to my Divinity, *Preaching in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, though not ſincerely, though but in pretence, though not in truth*, (Crimes of which I hope our Conventicles are no ways guilty,) *and to become all things to all men, that by all means they may ſave ſome*, is but to do the Will of their Maſter: but more eſpecially when their aſſembling and aſſociating in ſuch Conventicles is only to redeem and improve precious time, by endeavouring to make all moments of their life comfortable and beneficial to themſelves and others, ſparing ſufficient time to humble themſelves, and to keep a conſtant communion with their and our God.

Pope *Pius* the *Fourth* could ſay, *That he would humble himſelf to Hereſie, in regard what ever was done to gain Souls to Chriſt, did become that See*: And ſhall Proteſtants, Clergy, and not Clergy, be like the *Saduces, and be grieved at heart that the People be taught the right ways of the Lord? Abſit!* I hope the Church of *England* (tho' there have been and ſtill are ſcab'd Sheep among them) is not yet ſo corrupted as to have that laid to her charge which *Chriſt told the* Scribes *and* Phariſees, *That in vain they worſhipped God, teaching for Doctrines Mens Commandments*: and of which St. *Auſtin* complained in the Church wherein he lived, which was ſo corrupted, *that the Commandments of God are laid aſide, teaching for Doctrines Mens Commandments; and thoſe exacted with ſuch Severity, nay with Tyranny, that they were more ſeverely cenſured who tranſgreſſed them, than thoſe who tranſgreſſed the Laws of God*: It is certainly ſo in *Rome*; I wiſh I could ſay it had never been ſo in *England*.

It is abſurd *to cry, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, boaſting of the Priviledges that the Goſpel doth afford us*, and at the ſame time to prevaricate with God and the Redeemed of his own Blood, to give them *ſtones inſtead of bread, and ſerpents inſtead of fiſh*, by ſuch their deſtructive Doctrines, and puniſh more for Non-conforming than for not Preaching; and as by Excommunication to deny and abridge the excommunicate the participation of Sermons, Sacraments, Sabbaths, *&c.* all outward means of Grace and Repentance. Did St. *Paul* and the *Corinthians* forbid him whom they had *delivered to Satan* to come to their Aſſemblies, or partake of the Sacraments? Did Chriſt ever forbid *Publicans* and Sinners to come unto him? *Did he not eat the Paſsover with* Judas *the greateſt of Sinners?* When the *Phariſees* objected his eating and drinking with Sinners as a crime, did not he tell him, *That they that are whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick?* Matth. 9. 11, 12. Did he not converſe daily with them? Did he not caſt out *unclean Spirits*, nay *Devils* out of them? And yet our excommunicates (tho' but for *Niff-Naffs*) muſt not approach the Temple of the Lord, nor aſſemble in the Holy Congregations: This hath been the practiſe of ſome Centuries of Years both of the *Popiſh* and Proteſtant Churches, when in truth there's no ſuch thing in Holy Writ, as it hath been and ſtill is uſed in both Churches: And that Excommunication that is mentioned in Scripture (if any at all) is in the body of the Church, and not in the Officers thereof; and which the Laity have as much Authority to exerciſe againſt the Clergy, as the Clergy againſt the Laity; it cannot be denied. Is it recorded in any Scripture, Old or New, that the Church-doors were to be ſhut againſt the vileſt Sinners, or Sacraments, or Communion denied unto them? and yet the uſe of Excommunication hath been and ſtill is ſuch in both Churches.

I ſhould account it a marvellous happineſs if any thing that I have written might ſo far prevail with our Clergy, as ſeriouſly to take into their conſideration their intereſſing and *intermedling with Civil Affairs* and Imployments, and alſo *Excommunication*, (which bring ſo much odium and contempt upon them,) and lay to Heart how many hundreds of Years the Church hath been impoſed upon and abuſed by them. The abuſe of which, by the *Roman Pontiffs*, hath been abominable, even againſt Emperors, Kings, Princes, and States, that all Hiſtories ſwell therewith, and ſtinks in the Noſtrils of God and Man. But not ſo much abuſed by any Proteſtant Churches. By *Excommunication*, as now uſed, they have done as much as in them lay to *fruſtrate the whole deſign of the Goſpel*, by debarring the Excommunicates the uſe and enjoyment of the outward means of Grace and Repentance. What ſtrange kind of Sacriledge is this? that when Chriſt hath appointed

pointed Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, *&c.* for the converſion of Sinners to him, and for eſtabliſhing and confirming them when converted, our Prieſts out of ſelf-Ends and Intereſts preach up another Doctrine; *viz. Excommunication*, which debars the benefit of them all; and ſo by a new Goſpel of their own, do, as much as in them lieth, ſend People to the Devil, inſtead of allowing them the means of Salvation? How contrary, how unlike were the Goſpel-cenſures of old to this now in vogue? they were for *Edification, not for Deſtruction*, as this *knack or ſpell of Excommunication is.*

Beſides the *Spiritual prejudices* to the Salvation of Souls by Prieſt-craft, it is extended alſo unto *Temporals*, as that the Excommunicate cannot ſue at Law for any Debts, Land, or for redreſs of Injuries done unto him, nor at his Death diſpoſe of his Goods or Eſtate. If this be Goſpel, I underſtand not Goſpel-truths.

It's a ſhame that Religion ſhould be thus made uſe of, and uſed ſo dirtily as to make it ſerve turns, and *Godlineſs to wait upon Gain, Pride, and Domination* of Prieſts.

It would be a marvellous happineſs to theſe Nations, if the Church of *England* Men would yet be ſo wiſe and conſiderate in theſe evil and confounding times, as to ſettle among themſelves the diſtracting Doubts of taking our *New Oaths, of Paſſive Obedience, of Non-reſiſtance, of Allegiance, of Praying for our KING:* For whilſt they are of ſuch different Opinions among themſelves, what would they have us ſad Mortals the *Laicks to do?* A ſeparation, if not worſe, muſt enſue, and that of the higheſt nature, and of moſt diſmal conſequence, infinitely beyond that of the *Non-Cons*, and which undeniably tends to the Perſecution, do I ſay, nay even to the Deſtruction of the *Proteſtant Religion* throughout *Europe*, which now lies at ſtake gaſping and *a bleeding* in this critical juncture of Affairs; and which is wonderful in the Eyes of moſt conſiderate Men, that all the *Papiſts* of *Europe* are at Defiance with our *mighty Neighbour*, but thoſe of our own Nations; which argues them to have but *Iriſh* Underſtandings, and perhaps *Religion alſo*: And if he ſhould prevail, *Actum eſt de Religione Proteſtantium*; and muſt be *Slaves to boot.*

I ſhall now draw towards a concluſion: firſt intimating an Axiome of that great Divine Dr. *Thomas Jackſon, viz.* ſuch are the Reciprocal Embracements and Interweavings of Truth and Goodneſs, that we cannot rightly judge any thing for Good which is not True; nor deny any known Truth to be in its own nature Good: yet it often comes to paſs, that our deſires are ſo eager and paſſionate on ſeveral Objects, (as Riches, Honours, Impery, *&c.*) that they get the *ſtart of Deliberation*, and our Minds and Inclinations ſo forcibly prepoſſeſſed thereof, that they cannot be diſſwaded from a miſtaken Good, and that it is a true and real Evil, and only a ſeeming Good. And deſires to have it abetted and countenanced with the Authority of Truth, are unlawful, and indeed prevaricating with God. And whilſt our *Trains*, our counter-luſtings, and oppoſite inclinations ſtand in equal Balance, there can be no ſettled Reſolution, or actual Choice. And the Affections after ſuch debatements will hardly ſway the Soul, unleſs the Underſtanding do wave and decline the Point whereat it ſtood, and either yield to the ſuggeſtions and illuſions of our fleſhly Reaſons for the time being as True and Good, or at leaſt not expreſly condemn them for Falſe, nor with Chriſtian Courage ſtoutly withſtand them.

Truths or Precepts Divine, conſidered in general, or without incumberances annexed to their practiſe, many there be, which affect more vehemently than their more honeſtly and more humbly minded Brethren, who more willingly ſubſcribe to the narrow Rules of the Apoſtles, *and ſo walk more exactly and more blameleſs in all God's Commandments.* But a fervent and precipitate imbracement ariſing not from a clear intellectual apprehenſion of the abſtract Truth, or zealous Senſe of their Goodneſs, but rather from general innate temper of deſiring eagerly and fiercely, whatſoever they deſire at all becometh the Mint or Forge of metamorphoſing and miſrepreſenting God's revealed Will in his Word, whilſt they deſcend to actual choice of particulars preferred in their courſe of life.

That Chriſt's Advice is to be followed before any contrary Counſel, is not to be denied by any Chriſtian: yet ſuch is the corruption of our nature, that almoſt every Man in matters of practiſe prejudicial to their private earthly Intereſts, will traverſe the meaning, whether of his cleareſt Maxims, or moſt peremptory Mandates, and ſuperſede them. Chriſt his reply to *Martha*, complaining of her Siſter

for

for not helping her to entertain him, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her*, Luke 10. 41, 42. includes and warrants a Maxime of most Holy use; *viz.* [That a life priviledged and vacant from Secular Imployments, for better Meditation and Solacing their Souls on Heaven and Heavenly things, is the most compendious and comfortable Course to that endless Life, which every good Christian proposeth as the sole end of this wearisome Pilgrimage, that at the end of his Days he may obtain the end of his Hopes, and be brought to the *presence of God; where is fulness of joy; and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.*] Were their Hearts true and constant to God, to the *true Interest* of their Souls, it were impossible but that their inclinations and assent should be swaied to the subordinate practises. But as the *Heart is deceitful above all things*, so it will quickly find Justifications, or Apologies, Tricks, or Shams, for the most sinister choices: the proud and haughty Spirit thus fobs and shams his own judgment; *viz.* practical Imployments for Preferments, (my opportunities and qualifications considered) are the best course I can take either for my own or others good: wherefore our Saviour's Advice to *Martha*, rightly limited and interpreted, is no way contrary to my choice.

And if he can light of other Sacred Passages which mention the advancements of God's Saints to Civil Dignities, (as *Daniel*'s wearing a Purple Robe,) and furtherance of the Churches Cause by his High Place in the Court, these he takes as sealed Warrants to Authorize his ambitious Desires or self-exalting Projects; and so in a trimming way, walking between God and *Baal*, making the Souls of Men, and the Glory of God, subordinate to their ambitious Projections; who, *Balaam*-like, for the hope of Honour and Preferment, rise early, sit up late, run and ride, and become more senseless of God's displeasure than was his *dumb Ass*. How many have we known pulpit Damnation against Pluralities of Benefices, and afterwards having tasted the sweet of one, have been content to swallow more, preach against three Parsonages as the most ready way to get two? How many have owned *Nolo Episcopari*, and yet accept thereof? For *Prelates* and *Priests* to intangle and ingage themselves in Civil Concerns is unapostolical, and to incumber themselves with Pluralities, with two *contra-distinct Offices*, and to be accounted as those that having *put their hands to the plough and yet look back, are not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven*, Luke 9. 62. And according to St. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 34. *no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Soldier*; and a Christian-life is a *continual Warfare*.

Is it not a sad and lamentable condition when the violence of our Passions shall endeavour by wrestings of places of Scripture, and by false Reasonings, to bring the strait and inflexible Rule of Truth to bend to their Bow, the better to serve their base ends of Pride, Self, and Ambition? For without some shew of agreement with God's Word, no Dogmatical Assertion can be maintained as true by any Christian.

But I have done, leaving them only to consider, *That the manifest and notorious abuse of Power*, (be it Civil or Ecclesiastical) *discharged the Faithful from the sin of Contempt and Disobedience*: the very word [**Abuse**] undeniably infers as much in its own plain and proper signification. And tho' this be an undeniable Truth, yet the subtle Ecclesiasticks will coin Distinctions and false Reasonings to enervate or evade the force thereof. So *Bellarmine* against *Gerson* in the point of *Excommunication* grants the consideration to be true hypothetically only; *viz.* if it be meant of the **Abuse** of the Keys in points *Essential*; as if the Prelate should exceed his Commission: in which case he agrees with St. *Peter*, *Obtendum est magis Deo quam hominibus*, Acts 5. What is this but to dally and to play fast and loose with Scripture, by creating subtilties and distinctions where there needs none, (it being always to be understood of *unjust Powers and Commands*,) and to fight against Shadows, to wrangle with their own Conjectures? Consider also that when a Prelate (so a Magistrate in his Sphere) abuseth the Power of the Keys, he doth more disparage and injure the Keys, and offends God more grievously, than doth any Man subject to his Jurisdiction, when he obeys not his Prelate.

And hence it follows, that in such-like cases it is best to *resist the Prelate to his Face, as St.* Paul *did* Peter. The Reason is demonstrable, for that *a human Præcept, subject to Errors, ought not to come in Competition, nor be laid in the Ballance with an express*

Precept

Precept from God. Beſides, *it is a greater ſin to abuſe Power than to diſobey, for that one abuſe of Power and Authority gives a greater ſcandal to the World, and is a cauſe of greater miſchief than many diſobediences*; and the Perſon of the Superior, as more eminent, is much more bound by his *greater Obligation* to God to do his Duty. St. *Paul*'s grave Rebuke to St. *Peter*, inſtructs Inferiors how they ought to behave themſelves towards their Superiors, and no ſcandal can ariſe from ſuch behaviour, but what is taken, not given. Therefore *Cajetan*, in his Tract, *De Authoritate Papæ & Concilii*, affirms, *That he ought to reſiſt the Pope to his face, when he abuſeth his Authority*; and ſaith, *Abuſus poteſtatis, qui deſtruit, obviam eunt congruis remediis, non obediendo in malis, non adulando, non tacendo, ſed arguendo, Advocando illuſtres ad increpandum exemplo Pauli*, &c. The concluſion is certain, *That as they that obey not their Superiors, commanding according to his Precepts that gave them their Authority, are to be condemned, ſo the Superiors that abuſe the ſame Authority.*

Notwithſtanding ſuch convincing Reaſons, yet it is wonderful to conſider with what confidence the mighty Potentates of the Earth, both Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, do aſſume and appropriate to themſelves Authority to lay that blame on others, which, indeed, and in truth, doth belong to, and proceed from themſelves; and from their own haughty and falſe Opinions, of I know not what *Divine Authority*, to be appropriate to themſelves, that when they command what they have *no Authority* to do, or command unlawful things, if diſobeyed, yet have the impudent confidence to lay the fault on the diſobedient, and account and perſecute them as Factious, Schiſmatical, Rebellious, what not? Whereas it is manifeſt to the whole World, and Hiſtories ſwell with examples of Commotions, Tumults, Rebellions, (as they are pleaſed to call them,) that have their primary Origine and Spring from the *abuſe of Power* in the Governors.

Look but a little back to the very beginning of the Separation that fell out ſome hundred Years ſince in *Germany*, which took not its Original from any *diſobedience* of the Subjects, but out of an *abuſe of Power*, and greatneſs in the *Prelates*, backt and countenanced by the *Civil Power*. It is very well known that it grew out of indiſcreet and exorbitant Extortions, and extravigant Faſhions of granting Indulgences, *&c.*

Whence began thoſe great Differences betwixt Pope *Paul* the Fifth and the State of *Venice*, but from the *Abuſe of Power*, Pride, Inſolence, and Avarice of the *Papacy*, and ſo adjudged by the *Papiſts* themſelves? Moſt ſtrange! that the *Pope* ſhould claim Authority to innovate and change the courſe of Judicature, and Laws of another Nation, that had been uſed and eſtabliſhed more than Twelve hundred Years paſt, and the Laws that had their Original Three hundred Years before; wherein if he had prevailed, what would the end have been? even to have ſtripped all the Laity of their Laws, Liberties, Honour, and their Goods, as they have done already of their true Religion. And in fine, ſome few, who (have nothing elſe but the bare name of Church-men) might, without fear of Juſtice, or controul, offend other Men both in their Lives, Honour, and Eſtate.

As in the *Eccleſiaſtical*, ſo in the *Civil Government*, run to and fro, far and near, through the Chriſtian World, conſult all Hiſtories, conſider with your exacteſt Minds, and Judgments, and you will certainly find all the Seditions, Confuſions, and thoſe called Rebellions, have moſt eſpecially been occaſioned and proceeded from the *abuſe of Power*; and that the beſt and trueſt Hiſtorians aſſert the ſame.

What made the *United Provinces* (quiet under the eaſie Government of Queen *Mary* their Governeſs) to ſhake off the *Spaniſh* Yoke, but the *abuſe of Power* by the Duke of *Alva*, raging againſt them with great inſolence, violently oppreſſing them by *illegal Taxations*? &c.

What made *Hungary* revolt againſt the *Emperor*, but his *abuſe of Power*, abridging their Liberties, and not keeping Covenants and Agreements moſt ſolemnly made with them?

What made the Subjects of the Duke of *Savoy*, about the Year 1559, to take up Arms in their own Defenſe againſt him, but his *abuſe of Power*, forbidding them (by the inſtigation of the *Pope*) upon pain of Death to exerciſe their Religion? How faithfully the many Solemn Treaties, and Conditions, and Edicts of Peace, for the Liberties and Religion of the *Hugonots* have been kept, is ſo notorious, that it's enough only to name them. *v. Mars Gallicus.*

I have now done, moſt heartily wiſhing that Divines would not be ſo ſawcy with the Word of God, as to put corrupt and falſe gloſſes upon plain places of Scripture; ſince to fall into open Errors, repugnant to the Scriptures, is a crime ſo great, that whoſoever falleth into it, hath few ſparks either of Godlineſs or true Knowledge. For to err manifeſtly againſt plain places of Scripture, is the greateſt blindneſs that can happen to Chriſtians, and the greateſt chaſtiſement that God can impoſe in puniſhment of him, whoſoever ſhall make uſe of Divine Authority to ſerve his own turn in ſiniſter ends, for ſublunary and worldly Intereſt.

I ſhall conclude with Judicious *Hooker*; viz. *That impoſſible it is, that any ſhould have compleat lawful Power over Commonwealths, but by conſent of Men, or immediate appointment of God; becauſe not having the natural Superiority of Fathers, their Power muſt either be uſurped, and then unlawful; or, if lawful, then either granted, or conſented unto, by them over whom they exerciſe the ſame; or elſe given extraordinarily from God, unto whom all the World is ſubject.*

That natural Defence requires no Jurisdiction at all, and doth not appertain to *Magiſtrates only*, but to *private Men alſo*, and that it is impoſſible that *lawful Defence can be the Sin of Rebellion.*

And therefore do conclude, That they are to be condemned that obey not their lawful Superiors, commanding lawful things lawfully; and thoſe *Superiors* to be condemned that abuſe the Laws, Powers, Priviledges, and Prerogatives of thoſe who gave them ſuch Authorities.

Opus exegi, & Liberavi animam meam.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 2. line 22. for *Pætus Thraſea*, read *Thraſeas Pætus*. l. 35. r. *abire*. p. 4. l. 2. *been (as of old, ſo.* p. 5. l. 43. r. *for the raiſing of*. p. 8. l. 32. dele *to be*. l. 37. r. *denied*. l. 44. r. fraudulenter ſe occultat. p. 9. l. 30. *is abſol.* l. 55. r. *commonly were referred*. ult. dele *were*. p. 14. l. 8. r. *proceeding, for hath proceeded*. p. 15. l. 5. r. *abuſed*. l. 24. r. *accuſed, for abuſed*. l. 37. dele *now*. p. 16. l. 2. r. *metamorphoſed*. l. 53. r. *villaines*. antep. r. *think it ſhould*. p. 17. l. 37. r. Talionis. l. 43. dele *and*. p. 22. l. 1. r. *during for ever*. l. 8. r. *or ſo much as of*. p. 23. l. 14. r. *Panagyriſt*. p. 25. l. 21. dele *Parenthеſes*. l. 41. r. *that rich City, Marcion*. p. 27. l. 1. dele *the firſt And*. p. 28. l. 32. r. *it for them*. p. 31. l. 4. dele 32. p. 32. l. 39. dele 32. p. 35. l. 60. r. *Clergies*.